

GOD OF WAR

By

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DREYFUS

Based on the video game created by SCEA

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FADE IN

EXT. AEGEAN SEA - NIGHT

Wind rips the top off the sea, blinding us to everything as we race over the waves.

FATE (V.O.)

Time is my loom. Lives are my threads.

Matching speed now with an enormous roller which forms, surges up and explodes on a black cliff face, hurling us straight up with the spray --

FATE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

It takes a sharp eye to follow the strings. To weave them into a picture.

-- through strata of clouds strobe-lit by lightning until we breach a last layer and find --

EXT. CLIFF TOP - NIGHT

-- a GHOST, whipped by rain, standing at the cliff edge. Pale, forlorn. A massive, brutish body, scarred with wounds. BROKEN CHAINS around immense forearms. Fearsome. Iconic.

FATE (V.O.)

And when the tapestry is done, to know when to cut them. My shears are sharp. But once an eon, a thread escapes me. Ends badly. And Fate itself unravels.

Closer on his chalk-white face. Sunken black eyes open. It's no ghost. It's a man: KRATOS.

FATE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

For whom the gods themselves will destroy...

(beat)

They first drive mad.

He tips off the cliff. PUSH THROUGH those black pits of rage into --

EXT. CENTRAL PELOPONNESUS, ANCIENT GREECE - DAY

-- A PREDATORY POV OF: a raven beauty, LEIA - mid 20s - and a young girl, IONE, 6, running away across a summer meadow, trying desperately to escape us.

Bare legs whisk long grass. A wake of wildflowers and milkweed seeds. The little girl glances back, SHRIEKS.

Horizon spreading out now - crest of the hill - a precipice. Nowhere for the prey left to run - final screams --

-- as we snag them, rush off the cliff, out into space -

- and land on a spire 35 feet across a chasm, the IMPACT JARRING US OUT OF THE POV, REVEALING:

A different KRATOS. 30s. Shaved head. Pure physical power. He is Primal Man in all his potent glory -- not yet savaged by the gods. He LAUGHS.

Cliffs drop away on all sides to a vale a thousand feet below. Leia and Ione are tucked safe, one under each arm.

Leia's breath is taken away by the leap, the view and --

LEIA
Kratos..

-- her husband. Kratos releases them.

IONE
Daddy.

Kratos rises from his knee to stand beside his wife.

Kratos just took their lives in his hands... but in his eyes there is not the slightest recognition of this. Only utter confidence in his own strength. And at the sight of it, Leia's thrill of fear melts away.

KRATOS
The view is better from here.

He gestures. She turns and looks out.

Wild mountains and valleys. Where the myths are born. Where the gods live in crag and stream. Leia folds herself to Kratos' side. Alone on an isolated sliver of meadow like an island in the sky.

LEIA

It's so beautiful.

Kratos stares out at their world.

KRATOS

(to Ione, teaching)

There are many lands, many peoples
on this Earth. This is your land.

We have no great wonders. No
temples to scrape the sky.

(beat)

But in a thousand years our women
have never seen the fires of the
enemy, for we men have kept them
far from you. It is a feat which
no other people can begin to
imagine.

Kratos touches his daughter's chin, but it is meant for his
wife as well:

KRATOS (CONT'D)

It is my gift to you:

(beat)

Fear nothing.

OFF LEIA'S REACTION CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

Kratos strides through a rambling and low-slung ancient city,
his daughter perched on his shoulder, his proud wife at his
side.

FATE (V.O.)

Despite his fearsome countenance
and legendary strength --

An OX DRIVER'S stubborn OX stops in Leia's path. Kratos
grabs its nape with his free hand and twists the animal out
of her way.

FATE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

-- Kratos was a devoted father and
loving husband.

This striking, ideal family evokes looks of jealousy and
admiration from BYSTANDERS.

FATE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Great things were expected of
Kratos and Leia...

EXT. KRATOS' HOUSE - EVENING

A classical portico strait out of Titian. Vine-wrapped
pillars frame a view of the city below. Kratos crosses to
Leia, takes her into his arms.

FATE (V.O.)
...Not a few saw the makings of a
dynasty. Who could say what fame
awaited them? What high romance?

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

FATE (V.O.)
But Kratos was a warrior.

A PHALANX of Hoplite-armed men bristling with spears and
shields crashes into an opposing PHALANX.

FATE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Raised from childhood for one thing
and one thing only:

CLOSE ON KRATOS: Lunging from the front ranks with a ROAR.
He breaks his spear in a foe, spins his haft into a club and
crushes another's helmet.

FATE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
His qualities became known in
battle.

Kratos decapitates another enemy with the edge of his shield.

FATE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
And men followed him.

The Phalanx sweeps forward behind Kratos.

FATE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
In time, by the thousands.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL: the Phalanx is just one of dozens
following Kratos, churning across a dusty plain into a
titanic battle.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD, AFTERMATH - DUSK

FATE (V.O.)
Kratos inspired the fiercest
loyalty.

WARRIORS grieve over a fallen comrade -- carried to a funeral
pyre by Kratos himself.

FATE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
And honored his men's sacrifice --

EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

FATE (V.O.)
-- having first shared a warrior's
brotherhood with them.

ON KRATOS horsing around a campfire with his men, the focus
of it all, their beloved leader.

EXT. MARSHALLING YARD - DAY

Kratos stands before ascetic ELDERS. Leia looks on.

FATE (V.O.)
So when the barbarians came, it was
to Kratos that his tribe turned.

KRATOS
I will crush their hordes and take
their lands. By Ares, I swear
this.

The Elders point him to a waiting army in the fields beyond.
His army. HE ROARS for Kratos.

Kratos raises his arms to his army, basks in the adoration.
Filled with pride in its strength and his own. But there is
something else there too. Something darker.

It fills Leia with foreboding.

INT. KRATOS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Kratos and Leia roll in the throes of lovemaking. Physical.
Dynamic.

Then almost rough. Leia's passion matching Kratos' aggression stroke for stroke. Harder and faster until she can't keep up any more.

Then she looks in his eyes. What she sees there scares her.

And then with a cry, it's --

INT./EXT. KRATOS' HOUSE - DAWN

-- dawn. Kratos cinches his kilt in an open archway, steps into the morning air. Leia emerges behind him.

Sees Kratos gazing out upon HIS ARMY, encamped just beyond the city.

The sun rises. They watch its blinding sliver grow for a beat.

KRATOS

You are a warrior's wife. So you will not tell me not to go.

LEIA

I don't want you to.

KRATOS

I know. But I must go.

(beat)

To protect you and our daughter.

A beat as Leia looks at him. Deciding whether to call him on it or not.

LEIA

You are gone already. To war.

(no response)

Make what excuses you need, Kratos, but you do not fight for us.

Kratos turns on her.

KRATOS

What do you say?

LEIA

I say you do not fight for us.

(beat)

You fight for your ambition.

It takes Kratos aback.

KRATOS

These barbarians come to destroy our people.

LEIA

But you will not be content with turning them aside.

KRATOS

No. I will conquer them.

LEIA

I know you. Better than you know yourself. And I love you. And I say your ambition will consume you if you let it.

KRATOS

I am proud, yes. Ambitious, yes. These are virtues, not faults

LEIA

Only in their natural proportions.

KRATOS

Pride and ambition in moderation? There is no glory, no excellence in moderation.

LEIA

Yes, Kratos, there is. Only beasts are ruled by their appetites. We are not slaves to what we desire. Restraint makes us free. That is the essence of being human. That is our true nature. All good things will come to us when we are true to that nature.

(beat)

And that is excellence enough for anyone.

Kratos stares at her.

FATE (V.O., LAPPING)

But it was not enough for Kratos.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS - DAY

A mountain pass in which Kratos, surrounded by fallen comrades, fights savagely against BARBARIANS. His bronze breastplate is punctured in a dozen places, his helmet broken.

FATE (V.O.)

And leading his army into battle,
he sought victory.

An AXE shatters Kratos' shield. He kills the Barbarian, and throws his shield away. Tears off his damaged helmet, then leads a wave of his soldiers over a rise and

-- into a HORDE WHICH STRETCHES AS FAR AS THE EYE CAN SEE.

FATE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

A victory made glorious by
impossible odds.

A beat as Kratos feels his army disintegrating around him, a speck of flotsam being swept away.

FATE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

But all Kratos found on this
battlefield were his limits.

Suddenly a spear hits Kratos in the side, driving him to a knee. Kratos pulls its welder onto his sword. Kratos can't get the spear out of his side, and enraged, he twists out of his cuirass. Freed of his armor, he stands now to face --

-- a BARBARIAN CHIEFTAIN, bearskin-clad, bearded, half again as massive as Kratos. Kratos ROARS and dives at him, but the Chieftain's warhammer is in mid-swing and clips Kratos at the knees.

Kratos gapes, unable to believe this turn of Fate. The Barbarian raises his maul to pulp Kratos' skull.

FATE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

His end was at hand. But to
Kratos, victory was worth any
price. And so he called out to
Olympus.

KRATOS

ARES, GOD OF WAR! DESTROY MY
ENEMIES! GRANT ME VICTORY!

With that, THUNDER concusses the Earth, and suddenly the particular PITCH OF SCREAMING CHAOS seems HELD in the air.

FATE (V.O.)

And the god chose to hear him...

The Barbarian's maul freezes at the top of its arc.

A flight of ARROWS slips overhead at a snail's pace.

Droplets of blood wobble ever so slightly in the air.

The SCORE MOUNTS OVER THE HELD NOTE OF CHAOS, FEARSOME, DRAMATIC, as Kratos' mind begins to process that TIME ITSELF HAS SLOWED TO A CRAWL.

For everything except Kratos, that is, and --

-- the clouds which begin to glow -- a blood-red light like that of some alien sun. Brighter... and brighter...

The sky twists like a flaming tornado directly toward Kratos, almost to the ground, and then --

-- the tornado peels away from ARES. God of War.

He is a giant 600 feet tall in this manifestation. Hair and long beard blazing with meteoric fire. Cruel and beautiful. His black armor seems to crawl and ripple as if alive.

He towers over the battlefield, closes his eyes in ecstasy, inhaling power from the bloodbath.

ARES

A worthy sacrifice --

Then turns his gaze down full on Kratos.

ARES (CONT'D)

-- Kratos --

The 'K' cracks like lightning. Ares' voice incorporates the SOUND FX of the awesome supernatural storm.

ARES (CONT'D)

-- my servant.

Kratos shields his eyes from the heat of Ares' face. Through the rippling air Kratos sees the shapes squirming over Ares' armor. Ares raises his arms wide, and the shapes - thousands upon thousands of VULTURES - let fly.

From their midst, two HARPIES, half-woman monsters with vulture wings and legs, descend on Kratos.

In their talons dangle long CHAINS, at the end of which hang a pair of wickedly-barbed swords, the BLADES OF CHAOS.

ARES (CONT'D)

All will fear your name. All who stand in your way will perish. I will give you the strength of twenty men. I will perfect you. You will be the greatest warrior in all the world.

Kratos is awed and paralyzed by the god's presence.

ARES (CONT'D)

But in return I must know that no man or god will ever come between us.

(beat)

I must have your own darkest heart.

In the time-slowed space, Kratos beholds the agony of his men.

Glances over his shoulder as if he could see all the way to Leia and Ione in their far city.

Knows he is the last thing standing between them and the Barbarians.

Then Kratos turns back. Descending into himself, looks at his blood-smeared hands. The hovering Harpies tread the air, wings pounding to the beat of Kratos' own heart.

And at last Kratos raises his face to Ares. Eyes black. A long moment.

KRATOS

THEN TAKE IT!

ARES SMILES.

The Harpies drop the Blades into the ground at Kratos' feet, then seize his arms in their talons.

Ares raises his hand, and the chains on the Blades of Chaos yank upright in response to the invisible power. They begin to GLOW, red-hot, and then --

-- Ares closes his fist, and the chains lash themselves around Kratos' forearms, permanently searing themselves into his flesh. Kratos roars in agony.

ARES

The Blades of Chaos bind you to me now, unbreakable symbols of your service. Together we will bring war to the far corners of the Earth!

And as Ares' smoldering hair begins to grow and twist, shrouding him once again in the tornado:

ARES (CONT'D)

Cleave your foes. Slake your rage with blood. Let the world shake at the sight of you now...

The Harpies can no longer hold Kratos, and in that instant he yanks the chains, the Blades rip free of the ground, and SCISSOR the air, slicing the Harpies in two at their waists and --

-- taking off the Barbarian Chieftain's upraised arms and head.

TIME EXPLODES BACK into full motion, a hail of weapons and body parts and debris.

The tornado that Ares has become lifts and touches down in the midst of the battlefield, incinerating thousands, sucking them up and spitting out a rain of bones and weapons and ash..

And Kratos, arms whirling in mindless bloodlust, scythes his way through the horde, literally killing scores of Barbarians with each sweep of his Blades.

An endless cloud of vultures follows Kratos, hungry, feeding on the dead, TRANSFORMING INTO HARPIES in his wake.

The flaming tornado lifts from the field, pauses, then like a finger crushing ants, drives down on the masses again. For an instant, it seems indeed to be a finger, the clouds far above rolling into a subliminal image of Ares' cruel face.

FATE (V.O.)

With these unholy gifts, Kratos seized his victory.

CLOSE ON KRATOS, raging, unstoppable.

EXT. CENTRAL PELOPONNESUS, ANCIENT GREECE - DAY

Kratos stands at the brink of the hill where he once chased Leia and Ione. The sky is crimson, the setting sun a bloodshot eye. Towers of smoke rise from campfires and hamlets set alight by Kratos' own unruly hordes. They fill the once-magic vales below.

WARRIORS waiting on Kratos suddenly part, make way for Leia to approach. Ione shelters behind her.

KRATOS

I want you to see. See how strong
I have become.

Leia looks out at the pillaged land. Speechless with horror. Then sorrow at everything between them she has lost.

LEIA

Kratos.
(beat)
I am afraid.

Kratos turns to her. She stares out at the spire, remembering the feeling she had in his arms.

LEIA (CONT'D)

It would have been better had you
stumbled from this cliff that day.

It hurts him. A beat as they stare at each other.

KRATOS

But this land is yours now.

LEIA

It was ours already. All I ever
wanted was you.

ON KRATOS: is she getting through? Then cold and covering:

KRATOS

Rule it how you wish. Or let them
have it.

He gestures to his waiting Warriors. He looks back out... to the horizon.

KRATOS (CONT'D)

Other lands wait for me.

Leia erupts. Pure fury and scorn.

LEIA

Kratos! How much will be enough?

He considers it. Feels the past slipping away. His future in front of him.

LEIA (CONT'D)

You call yourself a man. But you are a beast.

He steps toward her in reflex to strike her. But she doesn't flinch. And it stops him cold.

ON HIS FACE: some deep part of him appalled by his own instinct.

ON LEIA'S: seeing it. And finding a sliver of hope in it.

LEIA (CONT'D)

I will help you.

But Kratos just stares at her. No reply.

LEIA (CONT'D)

I will stop you.

She turns away from him, taking Ione.

EXT. MEADOW - DAY

Leia leads Ione down the hill through the now-desolate meadow. Kratos and his men on the ridge line behind them, now black silhouettes against the red sky.

Ione sees her mother weeping.

IONE

Mommy, what's wrong?

(no reply)

Where are we going?

Leia rallies. A hard look in her eye. A power play:

LEIA

To pray for your father.

EXT. CENTRAL PELOPONNESUS, ANCIENT GREECE - DAY

Kratos turns to his Warriors, Leia gone from his mind.

KRATOS

We march north. To take the lands
of my master's enemies.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. HILL OVERLOOKING SEASIDE VILLAGE - NIGHT

FIRELIGHT, illuminating the ghastly figure of Kratos, teeth
and face stained with blood.

He kneels in front of a gigantic TROPHY erected to Ares. It
is a makeshift shrine of shields and weapons propped up like
scarecrows, tier after tier into the darkness above.

KRATOS

I eat the souls of these foes for
you, Ares.

He lifts a human heart from a basin filled with dozens and
bites it. Throws the remnant in a sacrificial fire.

KRATOS (CONT'D)

I take the earth and water of this
land for you, Ares.

He throws a handful of dirt in the fire. Then a cup of
water. And as it sizzles away, Kratos' eyes FLASH, no longer
his eyes, but those of Ares himself. HE IS POSSESSED.

KRATOS (CONT'D)

Yes...

Kratos rises, looks out on --

-- a VILLAGE at the edge of the sea, grown up around an
ARCHAIC TEMPLE TO ATHENA. Then, to his Warriors, awaiting
his command in the darkness around him.

KRATOS (CONT'D)

A house of Athena. Burn it. Slay
everyone. The bitch offends me.

Kratos' Warriors ROAR and descend on the village. Kratos
himself draws his Blades --

EXT. VILLAGE AND TEMPLE TO ATHENA - NIGHT

-- BEGINNING A NIGHTMARISH SERIES OF SHOTS. DISJOINTED.
Some in Kratos' POV. Some riding on his shoulder.

Moving from shot to shot between BLACKOUTS. Like an out-of-body experience. Or the mind of someone who has been driven mad.

Smoke pouring out of burning houses.

CUT TO:

Warriors lifting an OLD MAN into the air on their spears.

CUT TO:

Fleeing WOMEN screaming as they are dragged down by their hair.

CUT TO:

A burning horse galloping by.

CUT TO:

Steps of a temple. Stalking up them in darkness.

CUT TO:

Kratos' hand cleaving something we can't see in the dark.

CUT TO:

A marble statue of Athena crashing to the ground, shattered limbs flying. Head bouncing off the floor.

CUT TO:

Fire billowing up, taping into a timber ceiling.

CUT TO:

Athena's marble head rolling toward us.

CUT TO:

Silhouetted figures screaming, raising their hands in defense.

CUT TO:

That head still rolling, closer now.

CUT TO:

Kratos' sandal crushing votive statues, clay figurines of a family.

CUT TO:

STATUES lining the temple walls, weeping as molten gold runs from their eyes.

CUT TO:

That head finally coming to a stop at our feet. And we --

INT. TEMPLE OF ATHENA - NIGHT

-- SHOCK-CUT back into a WIDE of Kratos standing at the center of the burning temple.

Fire blazes through the roof. Stonework cracks in the heat. The massive stature of Athena lies broken in front of him.

Along with Leia and Ione.

Kratos blinks uncontrollably. Eyes flicker from insane delight to utter horror as Kratos' mind fights Ares' grip. And then --

-- the Blades of Chaos fall from Kratos' hands. They are covered in blood.

KRATOS

Leia! Ione!

He kneels at Leia's side. There is a deep wound across her throat. He touches her hair.

KRATOS (CONT'D)

NO! NO! You are at home!

He can't comprehend it; doesn't know what to do.

KRATOS (CONT'D)

Why are you here? You're not here.
This is not you.

Leia's eyes flicker to consciousness, her mouth suddenly wells up blood.

KRATOS (CONT'D)

Leia...

For a long beat he just fumbles. Decides to press on her neck to keep her blood in. Pure desperation and futility.

Leia seems to resist him.

KRATOS (CONT'D)
Who did this? Tell me.

LEIA
(beat, all she can
whisper)
You did. Beast.

Hate and accusation in her eyes.

KRATOS
Me? Not me... No, not me.

But Leia's gaze of hate doesn't waver. Because she is dead.
He lifts her in his arms.

KRATOS (CONT'D)
Leia!

Kratos' dawning grief is as intense and profound as his rage.
And he EXPLODES.

KRATOS (CONT'D)
(to the audience of
statues)
What TRICK IS THIS!??

And then the flames rolling over the ceiling crackle with
Ares' voice, black smoke and fire rolling into a
manifestation of his face.

ARES
Now you are free, Kratos. Free of
the only thing left standing
between us.

Kratos leaps to his feet, still holding Leia.

KRATOS
Ares!

ARES
Now you are ready to become all
that you are capable of becoming.
Bring your legions across the sea.
Join my hordes at the gates of
Athens.

(beat)
It is time to make war unlike it
has ever been made.
(MORE)

ARES (CONT'D)

With you at my right hand, we will teach the other gods to fear. We will burn their temples, slay their worshippers, destroy the very faith which gives them power. They will yield to me. I will rule Olympus, and you will rule the Earth in my name.

KRATOS

No!

ARES

You are my servant. You are bound to me.

KRATOS

I gave you myself, not them!

ARES

What are one woman and one child to you when you can have thousands? Any and all that you wish? You cannot help what you are. What Fate has decreed you must become.

Kratos kneels. Gazes on Hera.

KRATOS

Oh gods.

And he lays her gently on the floor.

Then he rises.

KRATOS (CONT'D)

(beat)

What I become is your enemy now.

Like Ares' massive fist, an immense flaming timber suddenly falls and strikes the floor in front of Kratos.

ARES

OBEY!

Kratos gazes up at the flaming roof, unmoved.

KRATOS

Destroy me, Ares. Send me to Hades with my wife and daughter. Because if you do not...

(beat)

I will kill you. I swear it.

The roof begins to fall in sections, its mounting rumble becoming Ares' LAUGHTER.

ARES

Excellent! Come for me Kratos. I will drink your hate. Feed on the death you leave in your wake. At my side or not --
 (beat, a promise)
 -- serve me you will.

The collapse accelerates, roof now pulling massive pillars and cornices down with it, and in an enormous crescendo, the entire temple falls in --

-- leaving Kratos miraculously standing unharmed at the center of what is now a vast, flaming ruin.

He roars:

KRATOS

ARES!

As the God of War vanishes in the black smoke pouring into the now-open night sky.

Kratos stands there alone. The flaming wreckage has buried the bodies of Leia and Ione. The temple has become their funeral pyre.

Kratos moves to the brink of the flames --

KRATOS (CONT'D)

My wife. My child...

-- is he going to jump into the fire with them?

And then a cackling LAUGH snaps his head around.

Beyond the wrecked temple stands an old CRONE. She leans heavily on a staff of olive wood, wears a chain around her neck with the symbol of the Greek letter Omega.

She is laughing at Kratos. Infuriated, Kratos leaps to a fallen pillar, runs along its length, avoiding the flames, trying to get to her.

EXT. BURNING TEMPLE - NIGHT

Kratos leaps to the ground beyond the temple. He searches in the shadows --

-- then again hears the Crone's cackle. He spins on her.

 KRATOS
Laugh at me, Old Woman?

 CRONE
Yes.

Kratos is surprised, and it stops him from killing her.

 CRONE (CONT'D)
Ares has made sport of you. And
now like a rabid dog, you foam and
chase your tail.

 KRATOS
Who are you?

 CRONE
I was priestess of this temple.
His grief again takes hold of him.

 KRATOS
Why were they here? My wife and
daughter?

 CRONE
To seek the intervention of Athena.
To save your soul.
(beat)
Sometimes the goddess doesn't hear
so well.
(re: Leia)
Simple woman... She thought you
would spare the village when you
found her here.

 KRATOS
She said she would stop me...
(understanding)
She was trying to save me...

 CRONE
Throw yourself on the pyre, Kratos
and be done with this.

The Crone starts to shamle away. Kratos watches her,
glances back at the flames. But he doesn't move.

The Crone feels it and turns around. Reading him:

CRONE (CONT'D)

Your rage is greater than your
despair, is it?

Suddenly a GUST blows hot ash and embers past Kratos.

CRONE (CONT'D)

Then I curse you.

Then strangely, the ash is sucked back toward the fire and begins to whirl around Kratos.

Kratos stands there a beat, at the center of a slowly forming dust devil, not understanding what is happening:

KRATOS

Old Woman?

CRONE

Wear the ashes of your wife and
child, so that all may know your
crime. That all may scorn your
foolish bargain with a god.

The ash begins to coat Kratos, except for where he is smeared with blood - a stripe across his face, over his arm, down his back. In those places the blood sizzles, branding him, tattoo-like. He looks down at himself, does nothing to stop it.

CRONE (CONT'D)

Walk the Earth, Ghost. Hunger for
what you can never have.

The dust devil becomes a storm of ash; he shields his eyes in an effort to see the Crone.

With a final blast of wind, the ashes are sucked back into the fire rising from the temple. And the Crone is gone.

Kratos stands there, chalk-white, like a spectre. A ghost. He stares at the fire. THE FLAMES ASCEND, A CURTAIN WHICH BURNS TO:

EXT. TEMPLE OF ATHENA - DAWN

The SUN rising over the sea in the east. Kratos is still there, the temple burned out, thick smoke hanging over the village and shore.

The sun seems to wake him from his nightmare. He senses a WARRIOR approaching through the smoke.

WARRIOR

My Lord Kratos, the men are pillaging the countryside. If we do not recall them, the army will disperse.

Kratos turns his gaze on the Warrior. The Warrior sees his ghastly new face, and backs away into the haze.

Kratos opens his hand. It is filled with ash. He lets it sift through his fingers.

EXT. HILL OVERLOOKING SEASIDE VILLAGE - DAY

Kratos stands next to the trophy to Ares, stares out at the countryside. Distant smoke shows the path his out-of-control army has taken as it has pillaged and vanished into the landscape.

KRATOS

What have I done?

Kratos turns to the towering stack of armor, the battlefield trophy to Ares. Hollow. Ominous. The empty shells of war itself.

ON KRATOS: feeling the loss and devastation he has wrought on others for the first time.

With a roar of FURY he grabs the base of this gigantic pile - literal tons of bronze and iron. Strains to topple it.

And with a groan the trophy crashes off the cliff into the sea. Kratos contemplates the waves. Turns his sights to the horizon beyond the ocean.

KRATOS (CONT'D)

So you make war on Athens, Ares?
Then to Athens I will go.

EXT. PORT TOWN - DAY

A small port town sprawls up the side of a hill overlooking the Aegean. In its harbor MERCHANT SHIPS take on cargo.

Kratos comes into view, sees the ships. Their prows are marked with various figureheads of various gods and heroes, emblematic of their ports of origin. Kratos moves among them, then spots the one he's looking for.

It has a figurehead of Athena.

EXT. BEACH NEAR MERCHANT SHIP - DAY

SLAVES carry heavy ceramic amphorae aboard the cargo vessel. A fat, silk-clad MERCHANT CAPTAIN directs with a crop.

MERCHANT CAPTAIN

Move, dogs! I want off this beach before that weather sets in or I'll sell you to the lime pits! You think being a galley slave is hard -

He whips one of the slaves. The slave trips, and the amphora crashes open, spilling a dozen gallons of wine.

MERCHANT CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

- stupid shit, I paid more for that wine than I did for you!

He winds back for a vicious stroke --

-- accidentally striking KRATOS in the face. Looming behind him.

The Captain turns, angry. Then horrified. Kratos doesn't even seem to notice the ~~crop~~. Not a question:

KRATOS

You sail on the tide.

The Captain recovers eventually:

MERCHANT CAPTAIN

Yes. For Athens. Yes. But I don't take --

Kratos pushes past him, up the gangway. It doesn't matter to Kratos whether the Captain takes passengers or not.

EXT. MERCHANT SHIP - DAY

SLAVES pull at cars beneath the deck. Kratos stands in the shadow of the tall, curved prow and its FIGUREHEAD OF ATHENA.

The Merchant Captain and a cluster of tough-looking, sword-armed seamen watch Kratos from the safety of the stern. As the Merchant contemplates his unwanted guest, a HELMSMAN turns a nervous eye to the approaching STORM.

HELMSMAN

Captain.

(re: Kratos)
(MORE)

HELMSMAN (CONT'D)

He's cursed. We should make
sacrifice to Poseidon.

MERCHANT CAPTAIN

Poseidon can ream my ass.

His disrespect sends a chill through the other sailors. The
Captain guts up and approaches Kratos.

IN THE BOW

A beat, then:

MERCHANT CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

My men think the gods hate you. I
don't care. The gods hate me too.
If they even exist.

(beat, no reaction)

And if they do, what good are they?
(mocking)

Give me a fair wind, oh god. Help
my husband get it up so I can have
a baby, oh god.

(beat)

All they do is take our hard-earned
money... our blood...

That gets a glance from Kratos.

MERCHANT CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

And then screw us, give us plagues
and accidents and sundry styles of
bad fucking luck. If I did
business that way, I'd have ended
up dead on a tavern floor a long
time ago.

This earns the Merchant a dangerous look. He's wearing thin
on Kratos. What's this guy finally going to say to get
himself killed?

MERCHANT CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

So the gods out to get you? Get in
line. I don't give a rat's tit.
But if my men are a bunch of crack-
fingering pagans who won't be able
to do their jobs unless they cut
some poor animal's throat and throw
it in the ocean, well it's going to
cost somebody some coin. Which is
a long way of saying, that though I
don't take passengers, there is
still the matter of a fee.

Kratos grabs the Merchant by the throat, snapping -
 - the strap to a purse hidden under his blouse.

 KRATOS
 This will do.

The Captain backs away, angry but sufficiently intimidated.

Kratos returns to staring out at the sea. Other MERCHANT SHIPS lumber along with them; it's a small convoy. WIND GUSTS, darkening clouds loom, and he closes his eyes as --

INT. MERCHANT SHIP - NIGHT

-- the ship HEAVES and CRASHES in a swell. Kratos sits in a pile of skins, slung hammock-like below decks. The wet, lamp-lit space is packed with humanity. Slaves, traders, sailors, whores - sleeping, talking, eating, screwing - huddled bodies crammed together for warmth and courage against raging nature outside.

Kratos has his pile of skins and an amphora to himself. Swills wine as he watches the dreamlike, shadowy figures. Alienated from the scene of primal, caveman comfort.

A BLACK-HAIRED WHORE catches his eye. For a second or two, it looks like Leia -- though it's clearly not.

But the Whore has radar for a male eye, and nudges her friend, a RED-HEADED WHORE, who together crawl over to Kratos.

 BLACK-HAIRED WHORE
 You look so cold and lonely by
 yourself over here.

Hands roving into Kratos' spaces. Kratos' catches the Red-Head's fingers, lifting the Merchant's purse. She glances up fast; but he isn't mad. Instead plays an unsmiling little moment of tug-of-war with her, then lets her win, and she falls on her ass.

A hand goes up his kilt. But he grabs the Black-haired Whore by the hair, and twists her away from him.

 BLACK HAIRED-WHORE

Ow.

She turns back on him. Liked that. And liked what she felt up his kilt.

BLACK-HAIRED WHORE

Ooh. A beast...

At the word 'beast' he DARKENS. So much so that the Whore knows this isn't play anymore and moves out of reach.

A glare sends the Red-Headed Whore beyond arms' length too.

Kratos stands, moves to the ladder up to the deck.

EXT. MERCHANT SHIP - NIGHT

Tense sailors man the ship. Lightning and spray. Kratos, along for the ride, steadies himself against the figurehead of Athena. A hard wave throws him against it. He suddenly seems to realize what he's clutching onto and chuckles at the irony.

Then he steps back from it. Looks in the face of his wife's goddess. Goes somber.

A long beat. Deciding. Then he yells out over the storm:

KRATOS

Athena! You bear me no love, as I bear you none. But we share an enemy. Guide me. If not to my revenge, then to my destruction!

A long beat. Nothing happens. Kratos bows his head. Lost.

KRATOS (CONT'D)

Of course. Why would you listen to me when you would not hear her? So there truly is no hope...

CRACK-POW! LIGHTNING arcs over the ship. The rigging lights up with St. Elmo's fire.

Gouts of blue-green plasma jet from the figurehead's face, and then --

--ITS EYES SUDDENLY OPEN.

ATHENA

Kratos. You have desecrated my temple. Slaughtered my innocent believers.

The archaic image of her face is beautiful, direct. Her voice clear and powerful.

ATHENA (CONT'D)

And you must pay the price.

(beat)

But before it is exacted of you,
you may earn a measure of
forgiveness. To earn it you will
bear great hardship. And you will
suffer greatly.

It throws Kratos, the idea almost unthinkable:

KRATOS

Forgiveness...

ATHENA

My brother Ares seeks the throne of
our father, Zeus. I have long
opposed Ares, and have warned the
other gods of his ambition. And
Zeus has become deaf to my
warnings. He and the others now
underestimate Ares' power. The
laws of Olympus forbid open war
among us. But Ares has grown wise
to the source of our strength as
gods. It lies in the faith of our
believers. Without their
veneration we grow weak, become
shades of ourselves.

Kratos, lost in the prospect of redemption, regains his
focus.

ATHENA (CONT'D)

Ares intends to destroy me, the
sentinel of Olympus, as an example
to the other gods by destroying the
seat of my faith, my holy city:
Athens.

Kratos turns his gaze out to sea for a beat.

ATHENA (CONT'D)

No god may enter the sacred
precinct of another, so he sends
his hordes to do his bidding. Even
as we speak, they besiege my great
temple. My followers defend Athens
with skill, but time and numbers
are not on our side.

KRATOS

What will happen if Ares takes
Olympus?

ATHENA

He will exile the gods. He will
turn the Earth into a paradise for
his followers: a wasteland of war
and death and destruction. A blood-
shrine forever feeding his own
bloated power.

KRATOS

How do I stop him?

ATHENA

Go to Athens. Speak to my Oracle.

(beat)

There is a way to slay a god.

This gets Kratos' full attention.

KRATOS

The Oracle sees the future... She
will show me how? Can you not show
me?

ATHENA

You have indeed lost hope, Kratos,
and for good reason. You must find
it once again; it is a sacred
thing.

KRATOS

I have no use for hope. Only
revenge.

But then Athena's face seems to turn, looks out to sea.
Interrupted. Suddenly aware of a presence.

ATHENA

Something stirs. Through no fault
of your own, Poseidon is angry.
The Captain of this ship has
blasphemed him one too many times.
Stand in the way of the sea god's
rage at your peril, Kratos.

The St. Elmo's Fire flickers out, and her face, once again is
just a cracked wooden prow.

EXT. STERN OF SHIP - NIGHT

The Merchant Captain screams orders at the HELMSMEN. Kratos looms out of the darkness.

KRATOS

When do we reach Athens?

MERCHANT CAPTAIN

Athens!? We'll be lucky to steer clear of Hades. Now get out of my way!

All of a sudden LIGHTNING illuminates a horrifying tableaux across the water:

A GIGANTIC SERPENTINE FORM rises under a nearby ship. The ship lifts into the sky. Its back breaks, spilling men and horses. No sound carries over the roar of the storm.

Then it is just gone. Kratos and the others stare into the darkness, not sure they saw what they just saw.

MERCHANT CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

Fuck me.

As the Captain pulls a knife, panicked SAILORS rush below, and Kratos steps aside, wary, drawing his BLADES.

Two of the sailors come back from the hold with a GOAT. The fat Captain drags it to the edge of the rail in a hurry, raises his tiny knife.

MERCHANT CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

Mighty Poseidon, god of the sea --

-- AND OUT OF THE FOAM in front of him rises an ENORMOUS REPTILIAN HEAD, black and slick in the rain, its garage-door-sized mouth filled with sabre-teeth.

ANOTHER HEAD rises on the opposite side of the vessel. Atop a serpentine neck as thick as a sequoia tree.

MERCHANT CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

Hydra...

Then an EARSPLITTING ROAR erupts from the Hydra's FIRST HEAD. Kratos LEAPS just as the monster's SECOND HEAD crunches shut on two of the sailors.

The Hydra's head tilts back to swallow the two sailors it just killed, exposing its neck which Kratos promptly SLASHES.

But the monster is just so huge that the wound is only superficial.

It does, however, get the Hydra's attention, and the monster smashes down on Kratos, pile-driving him through the deck --

INT. SHIP'S HOLD - NIGHT

-- into the ship's hold. The Hydra's face pins him there amidst the cargo, gnawing for a piece of him.

Kratos manages to brace his legs against its jaw and SHOVES, gaining enough space to drive a Blade deep into one of the Hydra's teeth. The Hydra recoils in pain.

Kratos springs up fast, using the seconds he has to scramble away before --

-- CRASH! The monster's head smashes through the SIDE of the ship, intercepting him.

Through the hole in the hull, Kratos can see the lightning-lit sea beyond.

HIS POV:

Of the other merchant ships fighting a DOZEN of the Hydra's other heads. The Hydra isn't just attacking Kratos' ship, it's attacking the entire fleet. And winning.

But one of the other ships, a smaller BIREME, yaws out of control. The massive spike of its BATTERING RAM is now headed straight for them.

RESUME

The Hydra opens its jaws to swallow Kratos, but before it can, Kratos LEAPS INTO ITS MOUTH!

The Hydra tries to bite down. Kratos braces himself, holding its jaws open. And with its jaws open, its head is too big to pull out of the hole in the hull...

The monster, unable to eat Kratos and unable to extract itself, shakes back and forth until --

-- CRUNCH -- the beak of the oncoming bireme punctures its skull from behind, erupting from its mouth right in Kratos' face, drenching him with blood.

EXT. MERCHANT SHIP - NIGHT

Kratos hauls himself to the deck. The other Hydra head is gobbling up sailors and cattle at the stern of the vessel. The Merchant Captain tries to escape it, screaming like a girl as the monster eats everything in sight except him.

Kratos spies the CAPSTAN with its heavy anchor cable.

The ANCHOR itself must weigh half a ton, but Kratos gets it to a shoulder and turns on the Hydra. It has surged past him, snapping after the Merchant Captain.

Kratos finds his balance, and steps in between the Hydra and its prey.

KRATOS
Hey! Try this!

It's maw opens WIDE, and Kratos twists like a discus-thrower, hurling the anchor down its throat.

The Hydra chokes down the anchor, tries to chew itself free of the cable, but Kratos jumps to the capstan and TURNS the massive wheel.

And now the Anchor, caught somewhere deep in the monster's gullet, begins to tear its insides out.

The Hydra wails in agony, rears back, thrashing the ship.

But Kratos just keeps PUSHING the capstan, clack clack clack, each turn drawing the Hydra down toward the deck, and then --

-- SHRRRRAPPPP -- the monster vomits up its own gut, tearing itself inside out. The head falls to the deck with a CRASH. And the ship begins to list under its weight.

MERCHANT CAPTAIN
Cut the cable or it will pull us
under!

The Merchant Captain races for the tiller. Kratos chops the anchor cable, and the Hydra slides off.

MERCHANT CAPTAIN (CONT'D)
Help me, you idiot!

EXT. AEGEAN SEA - NIGHT

But now, just as the ship rights itself and starts to get away, out of the water rises the Hydra's MAIN HEAD. Twice as large as the others. Cloudy inner eyelids shielding its eyes. Far more teeth in its snagged mouth.

And it's pissed that Kratos has saved the Merchant Captain. It lunges for Kratos --

EXT. STERN OF SHIP - NIGHT

-- who rolls out of the way, EXPOSING THE MERCHANT behind him who SCREAMS as he is swallowed whole.

EXT. MERCHANT SHIP, RIGGING - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Kratos springs to the rigging and begins to climb. The Hydra loses him amid the sails.

RAAAAAAR!!! The force of the monster's roar tears rope and sailcloth asunder. But Kratos isn't there. It searches for him, not realizing Kratos is so fast that he is --

-- now OVERHEAD, Blades of Chaos POISED LIKE DAGGERS. He DROPS ONTO THE HYDRA'S HEAD and plunges his Blades into the corners of its eyes. The monster lashes back, throwing Kratos off, SHATTERING THE MAST as it does.

Kratos lets his chains out, using momentum to snap the Hydra's head around.

Kratos lands on the crow's nest, hooks his legs in the rigging. Back muscles rippling with power. Strains to pull the monster's head OVER THE BROKEN MAST.

THE HYDRA:

Thrashing, Blades buried in its eye sockets, isn't cooperating.

BUT KRATOS

works the monster from side to side, inflicting pain on one eye, then the other. With each twist of the monster's head, Kratos brings it closer and closer until --

-- it is poised directly over the shattered mast. And with a superhuman explosion of strength, Kratos draws the Hydra's head down fast and hard.

The mast pierces the Hydra's lower jaw, comes out the top of its skull. Blood sprays everywhere.

A horrible SCREAM rises from a dozen monstrous throats, drowning out the storm itself. Across the water, the other Hydra heads rear and collapse amid the wreckage of the merchant fleet. It is dead.

Kratos stands there, the monster's jaws open before him. And suddenly from its throat a tiny voice:

MERCHANT CAPTAIN (OC)

Help me! Help!

A beat of dark humor as this giant dead monster seems to be talking to him. Then Kratos peers in its mouth.

INT. HYDRA'S MOUTH - NIGHT

Hanging onto a rear tooth like a bad piece of food is the Merchant Captain. One false move and he'll slip down the Hydra's throat.

MERCHANT CAPTAIN

Help. Please. Help.

Kratos edges closer. Looks askance at his predicament.

MERCHANT CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

Praise the gods...

KRATOS

It's a little late for that.

Kratos plants his foot on the Merchant's face and SHOVES. With a scream the Merchant slips down the slimy black gullet and into wet silence.

EXT. MERCHANT SHIP, RIGGING - NIGHT

Kratos re-emerges from the jaws of the Hydra and faces the storm. Looks out on the flotsam, the massive, wasteful loss of life. Then shouts out at the sea:

KRATOS

Got to hand it to you, Poseidon!
You sure know how to kill a man!

A dark laugh escapes from Kratos, builds into absurdity.

KRATOS (CONT'D)

But you know you could have just asked me!

And then:

CRAAACK - BOOM! A massive STROKE OF LIGHTNING arcs out of the sky, just missing Kratos, leaving him STUNNED, singed, and blinded.

An encounter this close with a real bolt of lightning is a perception-altering experience, and it takes Kratos a long, deaf beat to look himself over, make sense of what happened.

He turns around and sees the Hydra's mouth smoking. And there, hanging loose from the Hydra's mouth, blackened and still crackling with residue electricity, is --

-- the HYDRA'S TOOTH. Kratos examines it. Burned into it are strange glyphs - like letters of some unknown alphabet.

Kratos pulls the tooth free. Sees it for what it is now: a weapon. A divine 'thank you' to which Kratos answers:

KRATOS (CONT'D)

(to Ocean)

You're welcome!

EXT. MERCHANT SHIP - NIGHT

Kratos drops from the rigging to the deck. The ship GROANS. How it has held together through all of this is a miracle of its own. But now it starts to CAPSIZE --

-- freeing the small bireme which bobs to the surface. Another gift from the sea.

Time to go. Kratos moves to the side to jump when --

-- a hatch bangs open at his side. It's the bedraggled and shocked Red-Headed Whore.

Kratos grabs her by the hair. Is he going to do something to her? Then he dives over the side with her as the SHIP GOES DOWN.

EXT. BIREME - NIGHT

Kratos' ship plows on through the night, CAMERA sweeping past him at the tiller, then flying off into the sky, revealing his destination, the majestic city of --

EXT. ATHENS - DAWN (ESTABLISHING)

-- ATHENS. But it's as if the archaeologists' reconstructions of the venerable marble city were all wrong.

Towering temples. Roofs clad in gold. The city wall, hundreds of feet high in places, is made of stones as big as houses. Its gigantic gates large enough for god-knows-what to pass through.

Flights of stairs, a quarter mile at the turn, lead up to the mountain-high Acropolis and its mighty Parthenon.

It is Athens as it should be. An epic city. A mythic city. Blown out of all human scale and proportion. A city of the imagination.

Beyond the city a black pall darkens the horizon as if the rest of the world were on fire.

And like a hand reaching out for rescue, a jetty extends toward Kratos on his approaching bireme.

EXT. ATHENS, HARBOR - DAY

Kratos' bireme CRUNCHES into the jetty. He springs from the bow onto dry land.

The Redhead calls after him:

REDHEADED WHORE
Where am I supposed to go!? You're
not just going to leave me here!

But he is, and he does. Moves along the jetty.

The harbor is strangely deserted. Now Kratos starts noticing things are wrong. The ships in the harbor are swamped. Stacks of cargo smashed. Marble is blackened and scarred. And there are pools of blood on the ground.

ON THE WHORE

The worse for wear, pissed at Kratos for abandoning her, climbing off the boat.

REDHEADED WHORE (CONT'D)
Kratos you --

AS A HUGE HAIRY HAND the size of her entire head, grasps her by the face, smothering her curses.

RESUME

But Kratos hasn't heard a thing. A GATEHOUSE lies just beyond the end of the jetty, barring access to the city proper. Not a soul is visible.

Instinct makes Kratos pause.

WHEN AN INSANE SOLDIER, bursts out of cover, right into Kratos.

INSANE SOLDIER

They're all around us! We have to get out of here!

Kratos grabs him.

KRATOS

What are you talking about?

INSANE SOLDIER

Got to get into the city. They won't open the gate. You've got to help me get in! They're everywhere!

Kratos smacks him, trying to knock sense in to his head.

KRATOS

I need to find the Oracle. Where is she? In the Acropolis?

INSANE SOLDIER

Oracle? ORACLE!?

He starts LAUGHING. Then rips away, starts running for the gate, screaming to the empty battlements above:

INSANE SOLDIER (CONT'D)

Help me! Help me! Open the gate!

Suddenly ARROWS zip out of a dozen murderholes, killing him. And all is silent again.

Kratos takes a look at the dead man, then the walls. He's not getting into the city that way.

But now his senses are prickling, and he begins to see a pattern in the destruction around him. He follows a trail of weapon marks and dragged blood over the edge of the jetty.

And there he sees it:

At the water's edge, beneath the walls: a half-submerged SEWER MOUTH. And strangely, the grate which once covered it has been torn from the stone and cast aside.

INT. SEWER EXIT - DAY

Kratos DROPS into the water in front of the sewer, then enters --

INT. SEWER LABYRINTH - DAY

-- the sewer proper. It is tall, arched, with a central channel. Side-tunnels branch off in a bewildering labyrinth. Water sprays down from above.

Kratos moves on. Judges he's past the city wall now. Spies a culvert to the surface above, and puts his hand accidentally in --

-- a LONG, TANGLED MASS OF RED HAIR. But this is a sewer, and he pays it no mind as a sudden DEEP LOWING SOUND in the distance carries through the tunnel.

It's darker ahead. Kratos draws his blades. Pauses. Strains to see down the main channel --

-- when out of a jet of water behind him unfolds a MASSIVE FORM. Silent. Wet hair clinging to its 10-foot frame. Horned head lowered. It loosens an arm. Glint of a battle axe longer than Kratos is tall.

A beat. And with a heart-stopping ROAR to accompany its body-splitting swing, it lunges through a stream of light --

-- revealing itself as a MINOTAUR.

Kratos barely rolls under the massive axe, springs to his feet, only then to be GORED --

-- into the air. The Minotaur flips its axe over to chop Kratos on the way down, but Kratos catches a downspout, and the man-bull's weapon slams hard against stone wall.

Kratos drops from the spout, kicking the Minotaur in the head. It recovers its axe, and CLASH-CLASH-SHING, it trades a rapid flurry of blows with Kratos --

-- and suddenly fumbles its axe. Odd... then the Minotaur raises the STUMP of its arm, discovering the reason. It bellows in agony.

It stumbles and trips down a flume into a deeper level of the sewer. Kratos skids after it, beginning an --

INT. SEWER, LOWER LEVEL - DAY

-- INTENSE TRACKING SHOT through a labyrinth of sewers. Zig-zagging through twists and turns, pitch-black spaces and archways.

The Minotaur moves FAST and bull-like, powerful hooves and haunches quickly accelerating it a turn ahead of Kratos who follows its bellows of pain and trail of blood --

INT. SEWER, LARGE CHAMBER - DAY

-- into a large chamber. Where the Minotaur, bled-out, falls over in the water.

Silence. Kratos breathes heavily.

And then he realizes he's not the only one breathing heavily.

FROM ALL AROUND -- shuffling sounds, a murmuring exchange of inhuman voices. And then

A human whimper. Kratos turns, and the first thing he sees - strangely - is the upside-down face of a RED-HEADED WOMAN. The woman - not his where - dangles by a rope over a hairy back, that of --

-- ANOTHER MINOTAUR. It turns around. And then Kratos gets the rest of the picture:

THE SHADOWS AND TUNNELS ARE CRAWLING WITH MINOTAURS.

A Minotaur enters from a shaft high up in the chamber with a new SCREAMING RED-HAIRED CAPTIVE taken from the surface.

RED-HAIRED WOMEN of all ages, shapes and shades, some alive, some killed by their bindings, are slung over backs and shoulders.

What the Minotaurs are doing with the women, whether they're food -- or something else -- and why they're all red-headed is anyone's guess.

KRATOS

Interesting...

A gigantic GRIZZLED MINOTAUR examines the dead Minotaur. Sniffs it. Prods it with a hoof.

Kratos notices its HIDE bears the same distinctive gray tint, the same pattern of spots.

It is the dead Minotaur's big daddy.

The Grizzled Minotaur raises its animal eyes to Kratos and ROARS.

Then all hell breaks loose. Kratos leaps to a ledge, barely flips himself out of reach as the Grizzled Minotaur springs after him.

GRIZZLED MINOTAUR
Man-cattle kill young bull!

Minotaurs shoot crossbows at Kratos. Women cry to Kratos for help. But all Kratos wants is to reach --

-- a slot of LIGHT far above, which, with a series of death-defying leaps from ledge to ledge he does --

EXT. ATHENS, SQUARE - DAY

-- and squeezes out of a sewer drain into a gutter. It's at the foot of an epic fountain in the middle of a city square.

CITIZENS and ATHENIAN SOLDIERS are astonished by Kratos' sudden appearance.

And then the masonry behind him shudders with the Grizzled Minotaur's IMPACT. It's so large, it can't fit through, only its arm which --

-- is unable to reach Kratos, it ROARS in fury, scaring off the bystanders. Then vanishes. Sounds of bellowing rage moving away underground.

Kratos turns, wiping himself off, taking in the scene:

DEEP THUDS. Stones and flaming missiles fly in over the city walls, crash through roofs. The fountain is the center of a network of bucket brigades leading to all quarters of the city.

Kratos turns to an ATHENIAN SOLDIER.

KRATOS
(re: the sewer)
There's a raiding party down there with a thing for red-heads. If I were you, I'd seal every grate and manhole.

The Soldier, still astonished, watches as Kratos turns to the walls.

KRATOS (CONT'D)

I am looking for the Oracle.

But he's instantly side-tracked by what he sees there. Beyond the walls the black pall rises, much nearer and more apocalyptic-feeling than it seemed from the harbor.

The smoke roils, suggestive for a moment of...

KRATOS (CONT'D)

Ares...

EXT. CITY WALL, BATTLEMENTS, ATHENS DAY

Kratos springs up the last few steps just as a boulder the size of a small car clips the top of the battlements, blasting a massive hole which gives Kratos a convenient and tailor-made view of --

-- THE LEGIONS OF ARES. Filling the Attic plain. Laying siege to Athens.

Flames consume the hinterland. Tribal war standards flutter in the firestorm-stoked wind. HUMAN BARBARIANS like the ones Kratos had fought in the opening crank giant siege machines and dig siege works toward the city.

Encamped MINOTAURS feast on humans. As Kratos watches, a MINOTAUR LORD blows a curling horn; its lowing call rousts his horned troops for action.

CENTAURS horses with human torsos, arms and heads gallop past, shoot arrows up at the city's defenders.

In the sky above HARPIES watch for stragglers, stay out of range of the ATHENIAN ARCHERS.

The city walls here are 300 feet high, 75 thick at the base. And despite everything Ares' minions are hurling at it, they stand strong.

Kratos stares, trying to penetrate the veil of smoke --

KRATOS

Ares! I know you are here! Show yourself! Ares!

A beat. Nothing.

KRATOS (CONT'D)

Ares! Come out and fight me!

Now drawing attention from Centaurs below, he gets a volley of arrows for an answer, but no voice from the sky, no giant flaming incarnation of Ares.

But he does capture the eye of --

EXT. TOWER, CITY WALL - DAY

-- a VALKYRIE-LIKE FIGURE in shining armor directing a group of Athenian Soldiers not far away. She stops what she's doing to take him in, hear him over the battle.

VALKYRIE

What is he --

Alarmed, she starts MOVING.

EXT. CITY WALL, BATTLEMENTS, ATHENS - DAY

Kratos stands there in the gap, raging out at the battlefield.

KRATOS

Ares! I am here to kill you!

He moves from the gap to the highest point along the wall --

EXT. BASTION - DAY

-- a bastion littered with dead soldiers. He stands at its pinnacle, shouting in frustration:

KRATOS

Come to me, coward!

And with that, the CAMERA REVERSES, pulling away, revealing --

-- Kratos on the bastion, an awesome feat of architecture atop the battle-pocked face of a GIGANTIC STATUE OF ATHENA.

The statue's torso emerges from the living stone below, sweeps up into the construction of the wall itself. It grasps a 100-yard long STONE SWORD, a bridge to outlying, and long-overrun defensive works.

THE CAMERA

Keeps pulling away, through clouds of smoke, into utter blackness...

...from which erupt a THOUSAND HARPIES.

Launched back now at Kratos --

-- who sees them coming and slashes into them.

Talons claw his face. Kratos grabs Harpies, rips their wings off, flings them onto the wall, stomps them.

There are now HUNDREDS of Harpies swirling around Kratos. We can barely see him in the flying, shrieking chaos.

And then like a scrap being fought over mid-air by gulls, Kratos gets lifted bodily off the wall.

Suddenly ARROWS zing through the swarm, dropping dozens of Harpies. Kratos falls to the stonework. A big Harpy drives its beak at his face --

-- but at the last split-second it's SPEARED THROUGH --

-- by the Valkyrie above him.

Kratos recovers and flips back up, ready to resume the fight, but now the Valkyrie and her men are into it, killing Harpies in droves, beating them back until --

-- with a parting chorus of evil shrieks, the Harpies wheel away into the sky.

The Valkyrie turns to Kratos. She is 20s, severe, beautiful, eyes of an old soul.

VALKYRIE

You fool.

She turns to leave, but Kratos isn't ready to let her.

KRATOS

Fool?

She pauses. Looks back.

VALKYRIE

What other word is there for someone who calls out Ares?

KRATOS

There are others.

VALKYRIE

I suppose. Like idiot. You're lucky he didn't come himself.

KRATOS

I want him to.

VALKYRIE

Then you're going to have to challenge him somewhere else, because the city is Athena's holy ground. He can only send his minions against us. He cannot trespass here.

KRATOS

Then I will go out there.

The Valkyrie shakes her head in disbelief, starts to leave again, then stops herself.

VALKYRIE

What makes you think Ares would bother to fight you himself? A mortal. One of the millions he kills at his whim. What are you to him?

Kratos takes it in. On some level she's right. And it begins to eat at him.

VALKYRIE (CONT'D)

How do you fight a god?

KRATOS

I'm not going to fight him. I'm going to kill him.

VALKYRIE

Kill a god. Kill Ares. I take it you have a grudge.

He doesn't respond to this. Annoyed, she presses on.

VALKYRIE (CONT'D)

Tell me how you intend to kill this god. Specifically.

Kratos looks out at the battlefield. In its immensity, in all his tactical imagination, he can't see the answer.

VALKYRIE (CONT'D)

(re: his Blades)

Stab him with those? Maybe a big rock from a siege engine. Because I'd love to know in case I have to fight him myself one day.

(beat)

Ares is immortal.

ON KRATOS, thinking about this now as a real problem. Suddenly the edge is off him a little.

KRATOS

Who are you?

VALKYRIE

A defender of my people. Look out there. There are plenty of enemies who are very mortal. You are strong. I welcome you to fight at our side.

(beat)

But kill a god?

She shakes her head, starts to leave for good...

KRATOS

Athena herself has told me it can be done.

It stops the Valkyrie.

VALKYRIE

Athena herself.

KRATOS

She told me to go to Athens and find her Oracle.

VALKYRIE

Athena herself has said this to you. You're mad. Or lying.

(Kratos just stares)

Or not.

She studies him for a long moment.

VALKYRIE (CONT'D)

So you want to talk to the Oracle?

A beat. Kratos hesitates to admit he needs any help whatsoever, but...

KRATOS

She will show me the way.

EXT. ENTRANCE TO ACROPOLIS - DAY

Kratos and the Valkyrie ride on horseback up the broad steps of the ACROPOLIS, the towering temple complex atop the rock which is the heart of the city.

With its thousand-foot high combination of cliffs and walls, it is unassailable. The only point of approach is this immense stairway lined with shrines, statues, lesser temples.

VALKYRIE

So you think the Oracle will see the future for you. Tell you how to kill Ares?

KRATOS

I don't know.

VALKYRIE

What is your name?

KRATOS

I am Kratos.

The Valkyrie is suddenly cold and guarded.

KRATOS (CONT'D)

I see you have heard of me.

They reach the top.

KRATOS (CONT'D)

The Oracle is here?

VALKYRIE

She is now.

OFF KRATOS' LOOK: The Valkyrie dismounts. Kratos does also, can't help staring.

TEMPLE GUARDS, elite all-female soldiers armed like the Valkyrie, take their mounts. Guards relieve her of her shield and spear. Others begin removing her armor.

The Valkyrie, in fact, IS the ORACLE.

ORACLE
 (to Temple Guards)
 If he moves for his weapons, kill
 him.

KRATOS
 (amused)
 You're the Oracle.

Kratos glances through the gates at --

-- THE PARTHENON. Athena's greatest temple, a wonder of the ancient world. It is spectacular, painted with reds and blues and golds. An epic building with the proportions of the real thing, but far larger.

ORACLE
 How did you get into the city? The archers have orders to shoot anyone who approaches the wall.

KRATOS
 I followed a Minotaur raiding party into the sewers.

ORACLE
 Minotaurs are pathfinders, good in mazes but not very smart. Could be scouts for something else.

Kratos glances back at the Oracle who is now stripped to a revealing bodice. Just like that, she has gone from forbidding warrior-queen to a sexual, voluptuous woman, not unlike Leia. Except for one thing --

ORACLE (CONT'D)
 Any idea what they're after?

-- and right on cue she removes her helmet, shaking free her stunning mane of AUBURN-RED HAIR. Kratos REACTS and --

-- CRAAAASHHHH! A gigantic METAL MACE explodes through the steps, and out of the sewer climbs a MASSIVE CYCLOPS ENFORCER.

The one-eyed, brutish Cyclops Enforcer, 20 feet tall, legs like tree trunks, swats a horse into the air and then comes directly at Kratos.

The Cyclops swings his mace, missing and blasting a statue behind Kratos into smithereens. Kratos buries his Blades in the Cyclops' knee. The monster howls and staggers, but kicks Kratos aside and grasps his real target --

-- the Oracle. The Cyclops stumbles with her through the gate and into the temple grounds.

KRATOS
(to Temple Guards)
The Oracle!

Kratos starts after her, but SURPRISE --

GRIZZLED MINOTAUR (OC)
KILL MAN-CATTLE!

-- the GRIZZLED MINOTAUR and his herd-mates pour out of the ground after the Cyclops Enforcer. Kratos reacts just in time to parry the Grizzled Minotaur's axe, but can't block the butt end which comes around and slams Kratos down the steps.

More CYCLOPES climb from the hole, kill guards, force their way into the Acropolis. Kratos doesn't have much time to contemplate this though as --

-- the Grizzled Minotaur lands at his side, almost chops his head off.

GRIZZLED MINOTAUR (CONT'D)
Kill my young bull, I KILL YOU!

They go at it, fighting with it through the small shrines and ledges lining the stairway.

AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS

The Cyclopes are inside the Acropolis and begin to close its BRONZE GATES.

KRATOS

sees the situation and tries to disengage, but the Grizzled Minotaur won't have it.

GRIZZLED MINOTAUR (CONT'D)
I will serve your meat fresh to my war herd!

Kratos flips up onto the roof of a small shrine. The fall off the far side is a thousand feet.

He rips off his red cloak, and now in his loincloth, awaits the Minotaur which springs to the roof an instant later.

KRATOS
Then come and get it.

Kratos snaps his cloak in its face. It sees red...

... and loses its mind. It charges Kratos who matador-like, STABS it as it plunges through his cloak and off the edge of the temple.

But as it FALLS, it GRABS KRATOS' LEG and pulls him with it!

Kratos catches on to the edge of the shrine's roof, but he's got 1500 pounds of monster hanging on him, and the roof BREAKS AWAY. They careen off the cliff face and FALL --

EXT. LEDGE, ACROPOLIS - DAY

-- to a natural ledge. The Grizzled Minotaur is up first, and LEAPS on Kratos who uses its momentum to judo-flip it, and roll atop it. The Grizzled Minotaur is on its back; Kratos straddles its chest.

He brings his BLADE down hard, but the Grizzled Minotaur catches his wrist. It BELLOWS at him in rage.

KRATOS

All you're going to eat today --

A beat of struggle as Kratos forces the blade closer to the monster's face--

KRATOS (CONT'D)

-- is this!

-- and then with a roar more bestial than the Minotaur's Kratos breaks the wristlock and drives his blade DOWN THE MONSTER'S THROAT IN A FOUNTAIN OF BLOOD!

He looks up at the citadel, then starts to climb back up the cliff as fast as he can.

EXT. ACROPOLIS - DAY

Kratos reaches the stairs. But the human guards are all dead and the gate to the Temple Complex and the Parthenon is CLOSED. The Oracle is gone, taken captive inside.

EXT. TEMPLE COMPLEX, ACROPOLIS - DAY

The Cyclops Enforcer pulps a Temple Guard with its mace. Minotaurs chase down others. Cyclopes fling the last few defenders over the walls, and the Cyclops Enforcer limps into the Parthenon with the Oracle in his hand.

EXT. ENTRANCE TO ACROPOLIS - DAY

Kratos tests his strength against the massive bronze doors; there isn't the slightest give. ATHENIAN SOLDIERS from the city below are now swarming up the stairs. A voice booms from behind the walls:

CYCLOPS (O.C.)

Go away. Or we kill women.

It's against Kratos' nature to comply, but we see him go through the calculations. He needs the Oracle. Alive.

INT. PARTHENON - DAY

The vast space inside the Parthenon is lit by braziers. A towering gold statue of Athena stands in the inner sanctum.

There the Cyclops Enforcer flings the Oracle to the ground at the foot of --

-- THE INQUISITOR. Ten feet tall. One eye. Distended cranium. A withered arm. The Inquisitor is some sort of deformed, runt Cyclops.

The Inquisitor looms over the Oracle. And then he smiles. It's hideous, but the intent is to be charming. He extends a hand to help her up. She refuses and stands on her own.

INQUISITOR

My master sends his greetings.

ORACLE

Get out of this temple,
abomination.

The Inquisitor looks pained.

INQUISITOR

Yes, my kind is hideous to you.
And among my kind, I am a freak.
But not all of us are dumb brutes,
unworthy of civilized conversation.

A SOUND like a firehose on stone. Deep animal belly-laugh.

The Inquisitor and the Oracle glance over. A Cyclops is taking a piss on the statue of Athena's leg.

The Inquisitor shoots a look at the Enforcer who, without warning, SLAMS the offending Cyclops across the temple.

The little Inquisitor then HISSES a horrifying, guttural stream of Cyclopean language which paralyzes his troops with fear. They quietly retreat into the shadows. Only the Enforcer remains.

ORACLE

You were saying.

INQUISITOR

My sincerest apologies.

(beat)

Your language is so... sweet. You cannot possibly imagine what a delight it can be to have someone to talk with.

ORACLE

You didn't come here to talk.

INQUISITOR

Oh, but I did.

The Inquisitor sits down on the step at the foot of the statue of Athena. Pats the stone beside him to invite the Oracle over. All she does is stare, haughty.

INQUISITOR (CONT'D)

My Master, Ares, has sent me to discuss something of great importance. Though he and his sister, your mistress - have long been rivals, there is a matter which must by common interest and necessity unite them. I perceive that you intuit my subject.

ORACLE

I perceive that you like to hear your own voice.

INQUISITOR

A vice I own. My worst, I hope.

(beat)

As you know, Zeus All-Father fashioned a device for each of his immortal children. A device to be entrusted, concealed, protected by each god's most devout mortal servant. A device which can be used to call the Exile.

The Oracle tries not to react, but the Cyclops marks it.

INQUISITOR (CONT'D)

Your city is doomed to fall. There is no power in the world which can or will relieve this siege. Even now this filth --

(the other monsters)

-- is roosting in your holy of holies. It would not be in my Master's interest, or your mistress' to let the device in your possession fall into the hands of brutes like these.

He gestures to the lurking shapes around the temple.

INQUISITOR (CONT'D)

Lost in the sack of a city, lost to time --

ORACLE

(realizing)

-- or to a mortal who wishes to kill a god.

INQUISITOR

But a responsible, sane and civilized creature --

ORACLE

-- you... would take good care of it.

The Inquisitor lets out a satisfied sigh, rises.

INQUISITOR

A communion of minds. I could remain here with you forever.

ORACLE

(enigmatic)

Be careful what you wish for.

INQUISITOR

Show me where you keep the artifact my Master seeks.

ORACLE

It isn't here.

The Inquisitor examines her, starts to pace around her.

INQUISITOR

You speak the truth. In a cunning fashion.

(MORE)

INQUISITOR (CONT'D)

(beat)

When I was born, my father, aghast at my infirmity, threw me in the River Lethe to drown... But I did not drown. And the River gave me the power to see a lie as clearly as you see my face.

(beat)

As you truthfully relate, what I seek is not here... in this precise spot. But it is not far. This I know because I am 522 years old, and have seen my share of deception. And I tell you there is no greater ugliness than using true words to deceive.

He suddenly SEIZES HER by the hair. And though he may be a runt as far as a Cyclops goes, he's still far more powerful than the Oracle. He drags her up onto the statue's dais.

INQUISITOR (CONT'D)

They say your prophecies are never wrong. Where do they come from?

ORACLE

I see things. In dreams.

The Inquisitor finds what he's looking for: a CRACK in the dais, a plush carpet and pillow next to it. FUMES are wafting out. He holds the Oracle's head over them.

INQUISITOR

Show me where you go to dream, Oracle. Show me where you have hidden the Horn.

FUMES sting her eyes and face. And like a powerful drug, it seizes control of her. The Oracle writhes, trying not to succumb to the drug-gas she is addicted to, but then her eyes roll white.

A stream of GIBBERISH comes out of her mouth. The crack in the dais suddenly WIDENS.

Whether opened by a mechanism, or whether the Oracle's gibberish is a magic spell --

-- like some secret place you find in a dream, the Dais slides open to reveal the entrance to the SACRED CAVE.

EXT. ENTRANCE TO THE ACROPOLIS - DAY

Kratos shoves his way down the steps through the gathered soldiers to the Athenian Captain.

KRATOS

I need to save the Oracle. Show me how to get in.

ATHENIAN CAPTAIN

This is the only gate. And if we try to force it, they'll kill the women.

Kratos gives him a look.

KRATOS

Only one of them matters to me.

Then he examines the walls. They're too smooth to climb, and even if he could, HARPIES are gathering overhead.

He looks down at the base of the mountain. There, in a secluded grove, built into the face of the cliff is the entrance to what looks like some kind of abandoned temple.

KRATOS (CONT'D)

What is that?

ATHENIAN CAPTAIN

The old Shrine of Aphrodite. A ruin now. It's very ancient. It was here before the city was.

EXT. SHRINE OF APHRODITE - DAY

At the foot of the Acropolis, carved into the rock face like Petra, is the long-neglected Shrine of Aphrodite.

Stained stonework. Weeds sprouting from mortar. Its construction is of a different look - and era - than the epic Athens we've seen. Kratos approaches its rusted iron doors. No one has been here in a long time.

He plants his shoulder, and with a groan the 20-foot high door falls, hitting the portico with a gigantic CLANG.

INT. SHRINE OF APHRODITE, ANTECHAMBER - DAY

Kratos enters. It's a cavernous space. He makes out an archway to darkness ahead. The walls on either side are carved with erotic imagery. Over the archway, a pediment:

It is a tangle of statues of men and women and gods and creatures and animals fornicating in every possible combination. Even from the floor below, the disturbing statuary appears incredibly lifelike, a Fellini-esque orgy that has been frozen in stone.

Kratos eyes it, moves to a dirt-filled abutment font. Oil lamps of various kinds rest on shelves around it. He shakes one; it's empty. Picks another shaped like a torch, strikes his Blade against stone, the spark LIGHTING the torch-lamp.

Kratos passes through the archway into --

INT. SHRINE OF APHRODITE, SACRED BROTHEL - DAY

-- a massive, tiered room. A cross between an opium den and a church. Rotting Divans tilt to the floor. It is a sacred brothel where hundreds of temple prostitutes once plied their trade in full view of each other.

Kratos moves through the room. It feels haunted. And then he hears a soft female MOAN of pleasure.

It makes him turn to the far end of the chamber. There on a central tier is a golden Divan, much larger than the others. From his vantage on the floor below, Kratos can't see who, if anyone, is lying in it.

Blade ready and torch held high, he climbs the tiers to the Divan. It is empty. But now visible on the floor around it are MUMMIFIED MALE CORPSES.

He moves past the Divan, now seeing that the chamber continues on. There, as if on the other side of a veil of torn, black thin fabric, is ANOTHER DIVAN.

IN THAT DIVAN is a NUDE WOMAN pleasuring herself.

Or at least it seems that way. Kratos approaches for a better look and --

-- collides with what we now realize is a towering SILVER MIRROR tarnished with age reflecting the room behind him.

Kratos fast realizes what it is and spins back on the Divan behind him. Which is still empty.

Kratos takes a few steps back from the giant mirror.

IN THE MIRROR

the nude woman seems to notice Kratos and rises from her Divan.

KRATOS

whipsaws to the real Divan behind him. But there's still nothing there.

IN THE MIRROR

The woman approaches, her nude form is utter sexuality, briefly glimpsed through a kaleidoscope of shadows, tarnish and torchlight.

KRATOS

Can't look away from the mirror even though he feels the presence behind him and --

IN THE MIRROR

Appears the face of the goddess, APHRODITE. She gazes over Kratos. Eyes rove down. Her voice is a perfect, seductive timbre. Innocent and compelling and playful and fuck-me all at once.

APHRODITE

Oh. I've heard of you.

KRATOS

(realizing it can only be)

Aphrodite...

As she speaks, the features of her face shift through different varieties of outrageous beauty, each subtle change adding impact to every word she says.

APHRODITE

My friends don't visit me much here any more. Are you my friend? Kratos?

KRATOS

I have no quarrel with you.

Aphrodite laughs. It's like music.

APHRODITE

Ever the fighter. So strong. You are strong, aren't you?

KRATOS

I... am looking for a way into the Acropolis above.

APHRODITE

Athena's house? What do you want with that marble cunt?

KRATOS

I need her help.

APHRODITE

Her help. What can she give you that I can't? Wisdom? A magic toy? She's so good with those.

Kratos doesn't reply. She peers into him with her immortal capacity to read his mind. Quickly learning:

APHRODITE (CONT'D)

Ah. You don't know yourself.

(beat)

Then why don't you stay here with me for a little while?

She says it with mind-bending effect. Kratos turns to the Divan. It's too insane to be true... Knows it. And those husks of bodies around it... Resists her.

KRATOS

No... the Oracle.

Aphrodite approaches the mirror. Is she going to come through?

APHRODITE

(intensely powerful, a hypnotic command)

No mortal needs to know his future. Only his now. Grab it and fuck it; drain every ounce and swallow it until you're gorged and swollen on life itself...

Her EYES suddenly become Leia's. And what is supposed to be her clincher, instead breaks the spell:

KRATOS

No!

She is surprised. And then she laughs again.

APHRODITE

You don't know what you're missing,
warrior.

KRATOS

I don't have time for your games.

APHRODITE

Then if you won't play with me,
maybe you will deal with me.

It makes Kratos pause.

APHRODITE (CONT'D)

It is power you crave. Yet think
there is power in taking life?
Real power is in giving it.

(beat)

But in the ecstasy of creation,
even a goddess can make a mistake.

KRATOS

What do you want from me, and what
do you offer?

APHRODITE

It is one and the same. The head
of my daughter.

Kratos knows a bad deal when he hears it.

APHRODITE (CONT'D)

Athens, my sister's city, is built
atop a far more ancient one, its
inhabitants long forgotten. This
shrine, where my followers
worshipped was once a palace whose
chambers wind about the foundations
of my sister's chaste and hallowed
halls.

KRATOS

So there is a way into the
Parthenon from here.

APHRODITE

Yes. Through the dwelling place of
my daughter.

KRATOS

This daughter. Who would her father happen to be?

APHRODITE

Something I'd rather forget.

KRATOS

And how has your daughter offended you?

Aphrodite's face clouds over, but even in her hate she is beautiful.

APHRODITE

You'll know when you see her. Kill her and take her head.

(beat)

The entrance to the palace is through here.

With that she turns from him and walks away until she is lost in the depths of the mirror.

Kratos moves closer to the mirror. A faint breath of air brushes his face. He runs his finger over the pitted part of the surface, finds the pinhole which the air has come from.

Then winds back and KICKS the mirror hard. His foot goes straight through the corroded metal, and he quickly smashes a hole large enough for him to climb through.

INT. ARCHAIC PALACE, HALLWAY - DAY

Kratos moves through a trapezoidal hallway. Looks at the painted walls, geometric designs which appear even more ancient and out of place than the shrine did.

Something suddenly CRUNCHES underfoot. Kratos pays no attention. But we:

GO CLOSE ON the crushed pieces of what looks like a fossilized cockroach.

INT. ARCHAIC PALACE, ROOM OF PILLARS - DAY

Kratos holds his torch-lamp high and enters a gargantuan space filled with rows upon rows of gigantic pillars which stretch up into darkness far above.

Kratos, a tiny figure, moves to the edge of this forest of stone giants.

He brushes through a spiderweb. Something in his wake clatters to the floor. He turns, and picks up a SPIDER.

IT IS MADE OF STONE.

Suddenly he hears something far off. A VOICE. But it's too distant to hear what it's saying. Kratos moves in the direction it's coming from.

INT. SACRED CAVE UNDER THE PARTHENON - DAY

The Inquisitor drags the Oracle, still dazed, down a last spiral of natural stone steps into a MASSIVE NATURAL CAVERN.

It is in the heart of the Acropolis itself. The stairs end on a ledge. A waterfall across the cavern tumbles a hundred plus feet into a MIST-FILLED GROTTO.

Light pours through a hole in the cavern roof far above, and tree roots dangle, in some places to the floor of the cave.

The Cyclops Enforcer and a half dozen of its cousins spread out around the Inquisitor.

The Inquisitor reads the Oracle's alarm and pronounces:

INQUISITOR
It's here. Find it.

INT. ARCHAIC PALACE, ROOM OF PILLARS - DAY

The VOICE is closer now. It sounds like a young woman's. Sobbing. But there's something wrong with it too. Like she's hoarse, or asthmatic.

Kratos moving from pillar to pillar, cups his torch. And then:

VOICE (OC)
I see your light. I know you're there. Go away.

Kratos contemplates drawing his blade, but her voice is so plaintive...

He steps out from behind the pillar. There's nobody there.

VOICE (OC) (CONT'D)
 (from farther off)
 Leave me alone.

Kratos follows the voice. Moving among the pillars is like moving through a redwood forest. He rounds another --

-- and sees a hunched figure squatting on the ground ahead, back exposed. Kratos draws a Blade. Moves forward.

Stops. Prods the figure with the tip of his sword. Clink. It's stone. It's a statue of a TEENAGE GIRL, face stretched in a SCREAM. As eerily lifelike as the orgiastic pediment in the shrine.

VOICE (OC) (CONT'D)
 She wouldn't leave me alone.

Kratos's head snaps up. The Voice is closer, not more than two or three pillars away. But now Kratos knows whatever owns it is REALLY bad, and he warily steps back behind a pillar.

VOICE (OC) (CONT'D)
 She said she was lost. But I know better. My mother sends them to kill me. Mother hates me.

Kratos is trying to get a bead on her location as she talks. He moves to another pillar following her voice.

VOICE (OC) (CONT'D)
 She sends you to kill me now. Go away and leave me alone.

KRATOS
 Show me the way into the Acropolis and I will leave.

VOICE (OC)
 Go back how you came. There is no other way out.

KRATOS
 (realizing he's been lied to)
 Aphrodite...

VOICE (OC)
 Go back to Mother. Maybe she will give you what you want.

And Kratos realizes he has no choice but do her bidding.

KRATOS

Why does your mother hate you so much?

VOICE (OC)

She is warm. And beautiful. My Mother. I want her to love me.

A SOBBING sound echoes through the hall. But it's clearly coming from an inhuman throat.

Kratos, sensing it close by, rounds a pillar and SQUEEEELLLL!

A couple of RATS scuttle out of a hole by Kratos' face, tumble to the floor and race off.

ANOTHER ANGLE:

AN UPSIDE DOWN POV from 50 feet over Kratos' head wrapped around the pillar. Hidden by shadow. The source of the sobs. Kratos slides past below.

RESUME

VOICE (OC) (CONT'D)

Why won't she love me?

KRATOS

Did you do something bad?

VOICE (OC)

No! Not bad! I am a good girl. I stay down here in the dark and cold like she tells me. Why does she love everyone but me?

Kratos rounds another pillar. She's close. The rats cross the space ahead of him.

Suddenly one of them stops and LOOKS UP. And right before Kratos' eyes, the rat CRACKLES and URNS TO STONE.

Kratos FREEZES. A shocked beat as he tries to figure out what to do. Then he tosses his torch out on the floor next to the petrified rat. Using his blade as a mirror, he peers around the corner and up the pillars surrounding the rat.

But it's all hidden in shadows...

KRATOS

I'll tell you why your mother hates you.

(MORE)

KRATOS (CONT'D)

(beat)

Because she is a selfish whore.

There's a CRY of insult and rage. And now he can see something moving in the shadows --

VOICE (OC)

No! My beautiful Mother is not a whore!

KRATOS

A whore. Who only loves herself.

REFLECTED IN HIS BLADE: something massive and serpentine is sliding down the pillar across the way

VOICE (OC)

She hates me because I'm ugly! I'm a monster she says to me!

KRATOS

You're not the monster.

(beat)

She is.

With that final goad and a bloodcurdling SHRIEK --

-- MEDUSA lunges into the light DIRECTLY OVER KRATOS' HEAD, seizes him by the skull and twists his face right into hers!

MEDUSA

LOOK AT ME!

It's so hideous that it turns anything that sees it to stone. But Kratos' eyes are screwed shut.

MEDUSA (CONT'D)

LOOK AT ME!!!

Her hair - black venomous SNAKES - hiss and snap at him. Talons start to probe his eyelids --

-- and Kratos swings his Blade as hard as he can at her arm.

With a shriek of pain she flings him to the floor by the torch. But her arms are covered in stony scales and not visibly injured.

Kratos, wind knocked out, tries to scramble away, and only we get to see the horror that now descends to the floor of the hall behind him:

The Gorgon known as Medusa.

Her serpentine lower body is 50 feet long; Kratos' eyes weren't deceiving him when he thought she was still a pillar away. She was wrapped around BOTH pillars.

But now down on his level we get a sense of her true dimensions. Her human torso is much larger and more powerfully muscled than Kratos'. Her scale-armored limbs are articulated like a human's with dagger-like claws.

MEDUSA (CONT'D)

LOOK AT MEDUSA!

She HOWLS and SSSKRAAAACK! Her snake tail leg-sweeps Kratos with bone-splitting force, spinning him in the air so hard that he loses his grip on his weapons when he hits the ground.

Fortunately, a quick flick of the chains sets them whirling about him in a protective arc.

Medusa gives them space, darts back and forth, reflexes like a cobra's.

With a sudden move, Kratos lets out an extra length of chain and --

-- SLICES her across the torso. A jet of black blood hits the floor and TURNS TO STONE. The cut on her chest sealing with a STONE SCAR which looks even tougher than the hide it replaces.

MEDUSA (CONT'D)

You can't hurt me.

She shoots up a pillar, angling over Kratos, and then drops on him with all her weight.

Kratos stabs at coils as they wind around him fast.

She pummels and rakes him with her claws, then flips him in her coils and bangs him hard repeatedly on the ground.

Kratos manages to get his feet under him, and lunges around a pillar, using it to lever himself free. He spins to the floor, raising his weapons to cross-block a ferocious rake of Medusa's claws as her torso comes around the other side of the pillar.

The snakes in Medusa's hair SPIT VENOM, and Kratos counter-stabs blindly at Medusa's face.

He turns away, dares a look in his blade to find her in the reflection.

Then SPINS WITH A FEROCIOUS DECAPITATING BLOW --

-- which only creases her throat. She gargles blood for a split second, and then the wound SCARS OVER.

With a SCREAM OF HATE Medusa grabs the chains of Kratos' blades and begins to swing him in a brutal arc back and forth into the floor.

She then lunges up a pillar, dragging him behind.

UP THE PILLAR

Kratos, bleeding badly and in shock, realizes he's off the ground and going UP, 30 feet, 40 feet, 50, 60... how high do these vaults go? She's obviously going to fling him down from up here.

He tries to drag his feet on the pillar, slow her down, but can't. There's the roof, coming up -- he's 100 feet off the floor now and with his Blades in Medusa's grip --

-- he gropes for a weapon - anything - and in desperation draws the only thing at hand: the Hydra's Tooth. Like a dagger, he PLUNGES IT INTO MEDUSA --

-- releasing its pent-up lightning bolt. CRACK-POW!

Waves of electricity course through Medusa. Her coils contract around the ancient pillar... and THE PILLAR CRACKS.

Kratos pulls his chains with all his might, and with a titanic CRASH, the pillar sheers away. Kratos and Medusa fall with the giant cylinders of stone to the floor a hundred feet below.

Kratos breaks his fall on various surfaces mid-collapse, but still hits the ground HARD.

ON THE FLOOR OF THE HALL

Kratos rises, can't see anything in the dust. The stone cylinders of the pillar are scattered everywhere. And now a portion of the ROOF FALLS IN.

Kratos scrambles out of the way of the falling stonework.

Medusa is hurt, and drags herself out of the ruin. Kratos sees her slipping away toward the darkness.

With a ROAR he leaps on her back.

SHE HOWLS IN FURY. Kratos grabs her by the chin and shoves his hand into the nest of snakes that is her hair.

The snakes bite him over and over, but Kratos ignores the pain, and begins to TWIST.

Medusa wraps her coils about him, and they fall together, rolling on the floor. She's still incredibly powerful, but Kratos is relentless, twisting her head one way then the other, loosening up her muscles, getting momentum --

-- and with a final flop which lands Medusa under him, he pins her on the ground and with his bare hands --

-- WRENCHES HER HEAD OFF!!!

Blood sprays everywhere, drying in seconds to stone. Droplets jetted high into the air land like pebbles.

The snakes in Kratos' hands go slack, and Medusa's convulsing body knocks him free. He rolls away on the floor to watch the horrific sight.

And she is dead. All that's left of the Hydra's Tooth is a smoking and spent nub. He holds Medusa's head away from him.

He tries to set it down on the floor and has to break his hand free of the crust of stone-blood.

He crawls a couple of feet off, looks into his blade at her reflected face. Reacts, disgusted.

KRATOS
Zeus balls...

And then he peers up at the ceiling where a vast hole exists.

CUT TO:

INT. ARCHAIC PALACE, PILLAR - DAY

Kratos, Medusa's HEAD tied to his waist, climbing one of the damaged pillars, toward the hole in the ceiling.

INT. SACRED CAVE UNDER THE PARTHENON - DAY

The Cyclopes search the cave like home-invaders tossing a house. The Oracle and the Inquisitor are at the edge of the grotto near the waterfall.

ORACLE

Why aren't you asking me where it is?

INQUISITOR

You're an Oracle. You know that we intend to kill you after we have it.

ORACLE

So why not just kill me now?

INQUISITOR

I have some small hope that I can shake your faith by having the other women thrown from the walls. In the event we need a hint.

The Oracle doesn't even blink.

INQUISITOR (CONT'D)

You don't seem concerned.

ORACLE

I'm not the one who needs to be. I'm the one who sees the future.

That throws the Inquisitor, and losing his cool he grabs her.

INQUISITOR

What do you see?

She starts laughing. In his face.

INQUISITOR (CONT'D)

What do you see!

He SMACKS her. Runt though he is, he's still a Cyclops and it almost kills her outright. Only the fact that he's holding her keeps her from falling. Her nose bleeds, and she's dazed -- out on her feet.

And then something catches her eye and she SMILES --

ORACLE

I see your death.

ABOVE THEM:

-- IT'S KRATOS. WHO STEPS OUT OF THE CLEFT IN THE ROCK WHERE THE WATERFALL EMERGES. He stands in the rush of water like a pillar, takes in the situation, and then --

-- DIVES from the top of the waterfall.

AT THE EDGE OF THE GROTTO:

The Inquisitor spins in time to see Kratos hit the water.

The Inquisitor tightens his grip on the Oracle. They stare.
Did Kratos make it? A beat.

Then Kratos rises from the grotto, Blades of Chaos in his fists, eyes filled with annihilation.

The Inquisitor totters back, throwing the Oracle on his shoulder.

ORACLE (CONT'D)

Kratos!

Kratos moves for her, but --

-- BOOM! The Cyclops Enforcer lands at the edge of the grotto next to Kratos, and its big mace explodes in the earth next to Kratos' feet.

Kratos dodges to face the brute while --

--the Inquisitor uses the distraction to make off with the Oracle.

ORACLE (CONT'D)

Kratos, help!

Kratos stabs the Cyclops Enforcer in the forearm, but gets backhanded into the air in the process.

He rolls with the fall, and the Enforcer, hops heavily after him.

Kratos ducks another earth-cracking blow, coming up between the monster's legs where he SLICES deep through its inside thigh, cutting its femoral artery. BLOOD SPRAYS, and with a sickening thud the Cyclops collapses to its knee.

The Cyclops Enforcer's wound is mortal, but the monster has a lot of blood, and it winds up for another swing.

WHOOOSH! The mace backhands through the air, narrowly missing Kratos --

-- WHO GRABS ONTO THE WEAPON'S HAFT. Kratos swings into the air on the weapon, letting go at the top of the arc, and LANDS ON THE CYCLOPS ENFORCER'S SHOULDER.

The Enforcer paws and thrashes to throw Kratos off, but Kratos's legs are locked around its throat.

Merciless, Kratos grabs its eyelid... and PLUNGES HIS BLADE RIGHT INTO THE CYCLOPS' SINGLE EYE!

The giant corpse collapses in slow motion, face first. Kratos rides it all the way to the ground. WHUMP.

And casually steps off its neck as --

MORE CYCLOPS WARRIORS

Eight or nine in all, not as large or as well armed as the Enforcer, but still 10 tons of muscle and a giant weapon each, advance toward --

KRATOS

-- who eyes the new opposition.

THE INQUISITOR

reaches the far end of the cavern, turns with the Oracle amid the roots and stones of a stalagmite garden to watch.

ORACLE (CONT'D)

Kratos!

KRATOS

brandishes his blade. The nearest Cyclops draws his own -- it's 15 FEET LONG. The Cyclops SMILES.

Kratos grunts -- he may not be able to measure up -- but he's got more than the longest sword in the house. He's got --

KRATOS

CLOSE YOUR EYES!

-- MEDUSA'S HEAD!!!

THE ORACLE

shuts her eyes, and the Inquisitor turns away, but nobody else in here understands his words as --

RESUME

Kratos raises Medusa's severed head high!

Screams cut off in mid throat... A forest of limbs breaking in an ice storm...

The sound is almost as terrifying as the sight of the Cyclopes crackling and TURNED TO STONE. Which Kratos alone can safely witness behind the out-turned face of Medusa.

But more Cyclopes and Minotaurs are entering the cavern now, coming down the steps from the temple above --

-- and Kratos starts moving across the cavern for the Oracle.

A Minotaur charges up behind Kratos. He spins, PETRIFYING it with Medusa's head at the last second.

A Cyclops LEAPS, trying to body-slam Kratos -- Kratos petrifies it in mid air, then dodges the stone shrapnel as it crashes to the ground behind him.

THE INQUISITOR

Shouts out orders in his CYCLOPEAN LANGUAGE.

RESUME

Two Cyclopes cover their eyes in obedience, chase Kratos blindly. Kratos gooses one into kneecapping the other with its giant MAUL.

A last Cyclops stands between Kratos and the Inquisitor. It's covering its eye and swinging a huge flail.

Kratos goes airborne off a petrified Minotaur, Medusa in one hand, Blade in the other -

-- and SEVERS the Cyclops' hand. THE MONSTER TURNS TO STONE.

Kratos lands on it, kicking it over onto a pursuing pair of Minotaurs, even as he spring-boards back to the ground.

He then strides easily toward the last corner of the cave where --

-- The Inquisitor, holding the Oracle against his side, draws a long, thin knife.

Though both The Inquisitor and The Oracle's eyes are shut tight, the near-silence which has descended on the cavern tells them the fight is over.

ORACLE

Kratos! Are you there?

The Inquisitor turns, hearing Kratos' footfall.

INQUISITOR

Stop right there.

Kratos stops. Stands there, Medusa's head in hand, contemplating the tactical problem.

KRATOS

Give her to me and you live.

INQUISITOR

You lie.

Kratos cocks his head - yeah, he's lying. Oh well.

The Inquisitor uses Kratos' trick -- looks at Kratos in the reflection of his knife.

INQUISITOR (CONT'D)

You have the Gorgon's head. I see.

KRATOS

Want a better look? Be careful, she bites.

And with that, Kratos LOBS MEDUSA'S HEAD at the Inquisitor who instinctively opens his eye to catch it --

-- and SCREAMING, turns to stone.

Kratos lifts the Oracle, and together they turn from the PETRIFIED INQUISITOR holding Medusa's head before him, now fused in his stone hands forever.

INT. SACRED CAVE UNDER THE PARTHENON - NIGHT

Stars from the cavern skylight reflect in the water of the grotto. Lanterns cast shadows.

Kratos sits on a stone at the grotto's edge. He is beaten up pretty badly. Exhausted.

The Oracle comes down the steps from the temple above.

ORACLE

We've sealed the sewers and hunted the last of them down. The captives who were still alive have been released.

Kratos rises, looks her over. She's in a new revealing bodice. Has had time to repair herself. He squints at her jaw, realizing:

KRATOS

He struck you. Where is the mark?

She stares at him, moves to the edge of the grotto. Still wary of him and enigmatic.

ORACLE

You are hurt as well.

(beat)

The Sacred Spring heals those whom Athena favors...

Kratos glances at the dark water. Unsure of its power or his own standing.

ORACLE (CONT'D)

...and slays those she doesn't. Enter the water. You must breathe it, let it fill your lungs, surrender to it. To feel its power.

The Oracle is studying him.

ORACLE (CONT'D)

Does Athena favor you, Kratos?

KRATOS

(combative)

I don't need your healing magic. How do I kill Ares?

ORACLE

You don't trust the goddess.

A beat. Kratos remembers the burning temple. Looks at the water.

KRATOS

I don't trust myself.

ORACLE

Then how can I know you're not still the servant of Ares sent to deceive me?

Kratos smolders. Takes a step toward her. The Oracle holds her ground.

ORACLE (CONT'D)

I think you hate us. Women.

It disarms Kratos. Reflects on his recent history.

KRATOS

I don't hate women.
 (dark sarcasm)
 They just hate me.

Seeing Kratos has no intention of taking the Sacred Spring's spiritual test, the Oracle turns, caught by the sight of --

-- the petrified Inquisitor with Medusa's now-cloth-covered head in its hands.

KRATOS (CONT'D)

(making excuses)
 Can't get the head back. Kind of
 made a mess.

She rolls her eyes.

ORACLE

It's of no use to you anyway. No
 Gorgon's gaze would stop Ares.

KRATOS

Then what will? You see the
 future. Tell me what will.

ORACLE

I do see the future. But not all
 of it. Only parts. The gods see
 more, but they can't see everything
 either. So we guess at how the
 scattered pieces come together.
 (sharing a trade secret)
 Which is why we Oracles are always
 so vague.

KRATOS

So you can't help me.
 (beat, anger rising)
 Not the first time a god's steered
 me wrong.

He starts to leave.

ORACLE

Tell me, why do you blame the gods,
 Kratos? Is it a god who has
 steered you wrong? Or have you
 steered yourself wrong?

It stops Kratos. Then:

KRATOS

Gods. Men. Fate. Who steers
whom. I only know one real thing:

(beat)

I should be dead. My wife should
be a widow. My child, fatherless.
If there were a god who could grant
me that miracle, I'd pray to him.

ORACLE

It's not a prayer that can be
answered.

KRATOS

So instead I kill Ares.

The Oracle softens; Kratos' glimmer of self-awareness is
enough to build her trust on.

ORACLE

The power to kill a god. No animal
could wield it. No beast --

Beast. Kratos reacts to that word again; it's like it's
haunting him.

ORACLE (CONT'D)

-- but a man. A strong man; wise
to his own weakness --

KRATOS

-- what are you talking about?

The Oracle turns to the grotto, and --

INT. SACRED CAVE, BEHIND THE WATERFALL - NIGHT

-- the WATERFALL. Which conceals a niche behind its roaring
curtain. The Oracle comes through it. Kratos a beat later.

Soaked, they climb from the water. And there the Oracle
lights a lantern which reveals a space - a small niche - and
on an altar in the niche -

- A HORN. Ancient looking, wound with a leather strap. The
Oracle looks upon it, reverential and quiet.

ORACLE

There are things left over from the
Birth of Man.

(beat)

Powerful things. Forgotten things.

The Oracle picks up the horn, turns to Kratos.

ORACLE (CONT'D)

What you seek, the power to slay the gods, truly does exist. It has been hidden from humankind from time out of mind. Even speaking of the legend draws the eye of Olympus. And terrible punishment.

(beat)

This power is so greatly feared that, at Zeus' command, a mighty temple was built to hide it and protect it. A temple designed by a madman wise to the cunning of mortals, and built by the gods themselves, who upon its completion were eternally forbidden to enter it. But the gods who helped build the temple received these ---

She means the Horn.

ORACLE (CONT'D)

-- to be entrusted to their most faithful mortal servants. In the event the day should come when the immortals decided one of their own should be cast down. You must go to the Desert of Lost Souls and use it to summon the Exile.

(beat)

You then must enter Pandora's Temple. And take what lies within Pandora's Box.

She hands him the horn. He examines it. Then slings it over his shoulder.

KRATOS

And what would that be?

ORACLE

No mortal knows.

She is close to him now, magnetized by his ferocity and strength, her hopes for her city's salvation riding on him.

KRATOS

Will I succeed?

She considers. This is her greatest burden. A long beat. She doesn't want to say this:

ORACLE

My dreams are all of endless war
and suffering.

KRATOS

(unfazed, considering)

Then again, given what you see
every day, maybe they're just
dreams.

It makes her look deeply at him. The unexpected solace from
this forbidding presence moves her more than a million kind
words from a friend.

ORACLE

This cavern is a cleft in the heart
of Mother Earth. Descend through
it, and it will take you to the
Desert. You must beware the
Sirens. Spirits of women who have
suffered great loss. They will
feed on your pain. Lure you to
your death.

(beat)

You should stay and rest here a
moment before

She puts a gentle hand on him, but it only makes him retreat
into his grief and darkness.

KRATOS

The other gods see this siege of
your city as a game. What would
they do if they found out that
Athena was really trying to kill
their brother?

ORACLE

They'd stop her. And you.

KRATOS

So maybe resting isn't the best
idea.

He starts to go, but she still wants more.

ORACLE

I almost died today. You saved me.
I --

KRATOS

-- have what I came for. Stay out
of my way now.

(MORE)

KRATOS (CONT'D)

(beat)

The last thing I need is a reason
to live.

He exits.

EXT. DESERT OF LOST SOULS - DAY

Scorching DESERT stretches to a haze-filled horizon. Kratos emerges from the cave, its sheltering lip jutting into the sky.

He pauses, taking in the sand dunes.

A fierce wind scours the landscape. Kratos strides out into it.

He becomes a tiny figure lost in its vast expanse.

EXT. DUNES, DESERT OF LOST SOULS - DAY

Kratos crests a dune. The STONE HEAD of a massive statue lies cock-eyed in the sand, Ozymandias-like. Its body is nowhere to be seen.

Kratos, caked in dust, lips cracked, pauses to look at it.

KRATOS

Ruled the world, eh?

It offers a sliver of shade, and he crouches in it. There's a damp spot on the stone -- a divot which has collected a millimeter of dew. Kratos desperately puts his face to it, but gets more dust than water.

He turns. The dunes have ended. A desert basin spreads out for miles. Scattered stones - the ruins of some long lost desert civilization - make a maze of the basin.

A SANDSTORM is rolling out of the desert beyond, concealing everything from view.

KRATOS (CONT'D)

Ruled the world...

Then he gathers himself, rises, and turns resolutely into the storm.

EXT. RUINS, DESERT OF LOST SOULS - DAY

The sandstorm blasts Kratos. Can only see 20 or 30 feet in any direction. Vague shapes - ruins and god knows what - loom about him.

He is badly dehydrated; eyes red in the blowing sand. The desert is doing what a thousand enemies haven't been able to: it's killing him.

A SOUND, faint, carries over the howling wind. It makes Kratos stop and listen. Unsure if he's hearing things.

There it is again. Like a voice. Musical.

Kratos turns toward it, moves toward it. Then it seems to come from BEHIND HIM. And CLOSER. He turns around.

Strains his eyes and ears. Howling wind. Then the clearly discernible VOICE OF A SINGING WOMAN.

The song is in an unintelligible language, but it doesn't matter: it is beautiful, hypnotic, compelling.

Kratos' features soften with vague recognition. The voice is the same pitch as his wife's.

KRATOS

Leia?

It grows fainter. He moves after it, following FOOTPRINTS in the sand, a wake as if made by a dress. The wind is rapidly erasing it.

BEHIND HIM, a FEMALE FORM glides across the sand. Dark hair. Voluptuous. He doesn't see it, and by the time he glances back, it has vanished.

The music beckons now from the mid-distance. He thinks he sees a shape... it is a large stone. He stops, rests against it.

KRATOS (CONT'D)

Where are you?

LEIA'S VOICE (OC)

Kratos...

KRATOS

I hear you.

With enormous effort, he pushes himself from the rock and trudges forward. But it's brutal going, and after a few paces, he falls to his knees.

LEIA'S VOICE (OC)

Kratos, we're lost.

KRATOS

I hear you! I just need to rest.
For a moment. That's all.

And then, out of the blowing dust, across an extremely smooth space of sand appears the SIREN. Head bowed, dark hair concealing most of her face. A couple of dozen yards away.

LEIA'S VOICE

Kratos? What's wrong? Why won't you come to me?

Kratos squints at her. But doesn't see the two other SIRENS behind him, standing at the edge of visibility. Watching him.

It could just be Kratos' heat-stroke-altered perception, or the way they look in the blowing sand, but they seem somehow insubstantial, ghost-like.

KRATOS

I will. I just need... a minute.

LEIA'S VOICE

What's wrong, Kratos?

KRATOS

Nothing.

LEIA'S VOICE

You're hurt.

KRATOS

Yes.

LEIA'S VOICE

Tell me how you hurt.

A POWERFUL WAVE OF GRIEF COMES OVER HIM --

KRATOS

I killed you. And our baby.

-- WHICH THE SIREN SEEMS TO DRAW LIFE FROM. She is suddenly more physical, more real. The way the wind and sand aren't moving through her anymore, but AROUND HER.

LEIA'S VOICE

(thirsty)

Tell me more. Tell me everything.
I need to hear it.

But Kratos isn't in a frame of mind to catch on. He tries to get up.

KRATOS

Got to go.

LEIA'S VOICE

It's okay. You can rest here. As long as you need.

KRATOS

Ares.

LEIA'S VOICE

What about Ares?

KRATOS

Have to kill him.

LEIA'S VOICE

Why?

KRATOS

(more grief)

I chose him. Chose him over you.

LEIA'S VOICE

(rapt)

Oh Kratos.

The other Sirens WAIL, gaining substance and physicality also. But their voices merge with the wind, and Kratos doesn't catch them.

KRATOS

You were trying to save me. You were right. About everything. And I didn't listen. And now you're dead. And I'm not.

LEIA'S VOICE

Don't stop, Kratos. Share your pain with me. It is so... delicious.

Someplace in Kratos' brain marks the malevolence, and he tries to see her across the sand.

But the Siren is controlling his perception of her, like in a dream where you want to see the big picture but can't, forcing him only to see her in ECU pieces: a smooth leg. A graceful neckline. They look just like Leia's. And very real.

KRATOS

Why are you talking to me? Don't you hate me?

LEIA'S VOICE

Oh, Kratos. I don't hate you. Stay here with me. We can start over.

Kratos takes in the wasteland for a moment.

KRATOS

There's nothing here.

LEIA'S VOICE

All we need is each other.

KRATOS

Yes.

LEIA'S VOICE

We can start over. But those chains... I don't like them.

Kratos looks at his arms. The chains seared into them. His grief boils over into pain and rage.

KRATOS

Ares! Look at what you've done to me!

Kratos draws his right-hand Blade, holds his left arm out, and starts to work the tip of the blade in his flesh to remove the chain. But it's too deeply bound to him, and he grunts, making a bloody mess. It's not going to work.

So he holds his left arm out straight, poises his Blade to just cut it off at the elbow...

LEIA'S VOICE

Yes, Kratos. Yes.

... and hesitates. Looks at the chains on his right arm, the arm holding the Blade. Mind finally stumbling over the simple and obvious insanity of --

KRATOS

How will I get these ones off?

LEIA'S VOICE

I will help you.

The Siren, now fully physical, moves slowly and steadily over the sand toward him.

KRATOS

I can't see you. Why can't I see you?

LEIA'S VOICE

Don't worry, I'm coming.

Closer. Closer. And Kratos, at last perceiving the chink in all of this, rallies with:

KRATOS

(to himself)

How can you? You're dead.

The Siren is there. The wind whips her dress; Kratos times his move and --

-- GRABS the fabric. The Siren's hair blows back, REVEALING HER HORRID, FANGED MOUTH WHICH OPENS IMPOSSIBLY WIDE in Kratos' face and SCREAMS. It is horrifying, bloodcurdling.

Kratos reels the Siren in, a tornado of hair and fabric and claws and, rising from his knees, LIFTS HER HIGH BY THE THROAT.

THEN CHOPS HER IN HALF AT THE WAIST.

Still holding the flailing top half of the Siren, he wheels on the two other Sirens behind him.

They scream in fury. But it's nothing compared to the look of rage in Kratos' red eyes.

KRATOS (CONT'D)

Anyone else want to steal my wife's voice?

The half of a Siren in his hand suddenly disintegrates, her shrieking spirit sucked back into the sandstorm from which it came.

The surviving Sirens back away, vanish in the howling sand.

Kratos turns and discovers just beyond where the first Siren was standing:

A spring-fed OASIS. Hidden from Kratos by the storm and the Siren's mind-games: his salvation.

EXT. OASIS - DAY

Kratos plunges his face in the water. Drinks long and hard. Takes a breath. Now sees on the far side of the oasis:

A GIGANTIC FLIGHT OF STEPS. Wide as the great Pyramids, height lost in the upper reaches of the sandstorm.

EXT. HORN OF THE EXILE - DAY

Kratos reaches the top of the steps. Faint sky shines through the upper reaches of the storm. And there, chained on an altar at the end of a long prominence is a MASSIVE BRONZE HORN.

ON KRATOS, realizing he's found what he's looking for. The Horn around his neck is a miniature copy.

He takes the human-scale horn from his neck, examines its gigantic twin.

Realizes his miniature version is a mouthpiece which he fits to its mate. A beat as he considers what he's about to do.

FATE (V.O.)

And so Kratos, with the Horn of the Desert, summoned the Exile...

Kratos inhales and BLASTS the Horn.

It shakes the entire theater, testing the deepest registers of THX.

And the sandstorm slowly PARTS before the Horn. Then RETREATS, the morn blowing the mighty storm back and back until it has receded to a dark wall many miles away.

Kratos' breath fails, and he breaks off. Moves to the precipice to see his handiwork.

The desert lies empty and trackless below. A long beat.

And then a faint boom. Like far-off thunder. A beat. Boom. A beat. Boom. This last one he's sure he's heard clearly. It's coming from beyond the sandstorm miles away.

Boom. Sand trickles off the edge of the precipice. Ka-boom. KA-BOOM!

The now-distant sandstorm swirls, revealing a far-off mountain peak. It suddenly seems to lurch closer-- by a MILE.

Kratos stares, eyes playing tricks on him? And then --

-- CRUNK-BOOOOM!!! Over the horizon, out of the sandstorm appears a TITANIC FIGURE: CRONOS. King of the Titans. Father of Zeus. Thrown down from the heavens, and now THE EXILE.

He is miles high. Miles wide. Half-naked. Mindless eyes glazed white. Skin cracked and scoured by desert. Crawling on his knees. Chained to his back, the size of a small city, is PANDORA'S TEMPLE.

Kratos REACTS.

FATE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Cronos, Lord of the Titans, Father of Zeus. Condemned by his son to wander the desert till the sand and wind scoured the flesh from his bones.

Cronos crawls toward the horn. Though laboring and slow on the giant's own scale, each pace is a mile at a time, and this is bringing him to Kratos at incredible speed. KRAAAK-BOOM!

FATE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Kratos looked upon this immortal evidence of the gods' cruelty, and knew the heavens to be pitiless. If they could punish their own in this way, what mercy could a mortal like Kratos ever expect?

SHHRAKKKK-BOOOOM! Cronos is now towering before the precipice on which Kratos stands.

Kratos stares up to the temple, miles above on Cronos' back.

FATE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
And so Kratos understood his destiny. To strike back at the face of heaven. To throw down these unjust gods...

And Kratos LEAPS from the precipice as Cronos sweeps by.

EXT. CRONOS - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

He slams against Cronos' arm. Bounces off, tumbles down, and finally catches hold just above Cronos' elbow.

He pauses there, draws his blades, wedges them in the cliff-like skin of the titan, and begins to climb.

Cronos turns back to the desert from which he came.

EXT. CRONOS - NIGHT

Driving wind and rain lash Kratos. But it is Nirvana after his ordeal in the desert.

FATE (V.O.)

For three days and nights Kratos
climbed the Titan.

Kratos struggles across Cronos' shoulder. Moving at titan-speed, we suddenly rip through the rainstorm, and Kratos pauses to look up at his destination.

HIS POV:

Firelight twinkles among the towers of Pandora's Temple. It is both like and unlike the oversized world we've seen so far. Gigantic scale. Still Greek-feeling, but abstracted and warped, a riot of architectural voices and themes in the vibes of the various gods who have helped build it.

RESUME

Kratos reaches one of the immense chains securing the temple to the titan's back, and once atop it, finds it easier going.

FATE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And on the morning of the fourth
day...

EXT. PANDORA'S TEMPLE, GATES - DAY

FATE (V.O.)

...reached his long-sought
destination. Pandora's Temple.

Kratos climbs over a final edge onto a broad portico. The temple, like an enormous fortress, rises into the heights above him.

Visible amid its wondrous spires, a natural stone chasm, as if a mountain was torn out by its roots, chained to Cronos' back, then built into and upon.

Up broad stairs ahead of Kratos, stand towering gates. He looks around for guards of some kind. If there are any, they're not out here.

Kratos reaches the top of the steps, and with enormous effort, shoves the gates OPEN.

INT. PANDORA'S TEMPLE, CHAMBER OF THE CRYSTAL EYE - DAY

Kratos enters. The vaulted chamber is immense, cathedral-like. Literally hundreds of archways lead away from this room into the depths of the Temple. And at the center of the nave--

-- a GIANT CRYSTAL EYE on a pedestal redirects light from a skylight. Its facets illuminate the chamber's myriad exits.

Someone is standing before it. Kratos approaches.

An old man. Bearded, white-haired. Looks like Socrates in his classic white chiton. He is the ARCHITECT.

ARCHITECT

Most men would flee at the sight of a Titan. Yet you have climbed him to reach us. Endurance and courage. These are qualities which you will need to survive Pandora's Temple. Welcome.

(beat)

I am the Architect.

KRATOS

You built this place? I thought it was ancient.

ARCHITECT

It is.

KRATOS

So Pandora's Box is here, as the legend says.

ARCHITECT

The Box. Yes. All men dream of the Box. And what is inside.

KRATOS

I have come for it.

ARCHITECT

It is a burden I would be rid of.
And as much as I would like to
yield my burden to such as you, it
is not permitted.

KRATOS

Where is it?

Kratos looks around at the multitude of exits to the chamber;
even more are visible from this central vantage. This is the
heart of a huge maze; the choice of exits is endless.

ARCHITECT

It lies upon the highest pinnacle
of the Temple, in the Aerie of
Zeus.

(beat)

And as for how to reach it, there
are many ways. And none.

Kratos draws closer, menacing. But the Architect is unmoved.

KRATOS

(deadly)

You'll show me where it is.

ARCHITECT

Prove you have the virtue to wield
the power within the box, and you
will be granted it.

Kratos goes very, very still.

KRATOS

You'll give me the box now, Old
Man.

ARCHITECT

It is not mine to give.

(gesturing to exits)

Choose your path. There are many
dead ends.

A far-off CRY of something inhuman echoes from one of the
archways.

ARCHITECT (CONT'D)

I fear the Temple has gathered its
share of residents over the ages.
Many of them are no longer sane.

He turns away from Kratos, starts to leave.

ARCHITECT (CONT'D)

Test yourself against the Temple
and those who live here, and you
may yet possess Pandora's --

-- HE'S CUT OFF IN MID-SPEECH BY A BLADE erupting from his
chest.

KRATOS

I don't do tests, Old Man.

Then Kratos BEHEADS him with his other weapon.

It is a shocking, impulsive moment of violence and rage, even
for Kratos. There's blood spattered on his face.

KRATOS (CONT'D)

And I don't leave enemies behind
me.

Kratos turns from the Architect's corpse to the archways. He
moves to examine the nearest exit when --

-- he suddenly feels the BLOOD panning off his face like rain
from a windshield. He looks down. The BLOOD trickles across
the floor --

-- to the Architect's CORPSE. Which is now crawling to its
head. It's a horrifying sight.

Kratos watches the Architect reassemble himself. And stand
up. Kratos is ready for a fight. But the Architect only
peers at Kratos, haunted, sad.

ARCHITECT

Not everyone who stands in your way
is an enemy. And in the end, we
are all tested. It is how we grow.
Strong though your rage may be, it
is as a spring zephyr to the curse
of Zeus. I was once the greatest
Architect in the world. Built
cities and wonders beyond compare.
It was all practice for my most
perfect work: a glorious temple
unlike any the world had ever seen.
The gods vied for my favor, begged
me to dedicate the temple to them.
But I refused them all. I built it
to honor man.

(beat)

No greater sacrilege could I have
committed.

(MORE)

ARCHITECT (CONT'D)

And in punishment for my pride,
 Zeus tore it from its mountain,
 chained it to this Titan's back,
 and doomed me to keep building it
 until the day Pandora's Box is
 taken. Pride was my weakness.
 Rage is yours. You will not wield
 the power of the Box unless you
 conquer your rage.

Kratos looks from the Architect to his Blades and their chains.

ARCHITECT (CONT'D)

Choose your path.

Kratos glances back up. The Architect is gone. Now only the multitude of archways remains. Over each is a pediment depicting a god or hero or other event of this mythological universe.

Icarus falling from a flaming sun.

Diana and her wolves pulling down Acteon, who's been turned into a stag.

Hercules clubbing the Nemean Lion.

Kratos looks from one to another, reading into each a clue to what that path may hold.

And then settles on an archway. As he exits through it,
 REVEAL: ATLAS HOLDING THE HEAVENS ON HIS SHOULDERS.

INT. STAIRWAY, PANDORA'S TEMPLE - DAY

Kratos climbs the last few steps of a winding staircase and enters --

INT. HALL OF ATLAS - DAY

-- a deserted balcony running the length of a long, dark hall. A sound. The far-off screech, screech, screech of metal on stone.

And then, from much closer, HEAVY, LABORED BREATHING. It draws Kratos to the edge of the balcony. He looks down.

Directly below him, chained to the wall, is a WOUNDED CYCLOPS. It bears signs of torture. It seems oblivious to Kratos' presence. Whatever could catch a 20-foot tall Cyclops and torture it must be vicious in the extreme.

That 'whatever' surrounds a BONFIRE at the far end of the Hall to Kratos' left. The bonfire throws the entire room in harsh extremes of light and shadow, silhouetting:

What appear to be a tribe of hulking, bare-chested men wearing some kind of strange, animal-horn headdresses.

One is sharpening a massive carving blade on a stone. Others are hardening wooden SKEWERS in the bonfire.

THE CYCLOPS, muttering to itself in misery, SNIFFS. Smells something. Cranes its neck to look up. It SMELLS KRATOS.

Kratos eases back from the edge.

The Cyclops GROANS.

It makes the creatures at the end of the Hall pause and look in its direction. A beat. Then they resume their business.

Kratos, safely out of view in the shadows, notices that the masonry at the far end of the hall is honeycombed with crude CAVES. Hollows for these creatures which have taken up residence here.

And in one - is it true? - chink of SUNLIGHT.

Kratos takes in the rest of the chamber. At the end of the hall to his right is a 50-foot tall STATUE OF ATLAS holding up the CELESTIAL SPHERE. It is a gigantic marble ball a hundred feet in diameter which in turn holds up the ceiling. It is an amazing and beautiful work of architecture.

But otherwise the room is a DEAD END.

As Kratos watches, the leader of the creatures around the bonfire spews a mouthful of harsh, rattling language - clearly not human - and in response, four or five of the creatures rise with the cleaving blade and approach the Cyclops.

The powerfully-muscled, 8-foot-tall creatures move out of the harsh backlight, REVEALING THEMSELVES AS:

SATYRS. Satanic horns. Feral yellow eyes. Long pointed tongues. They have the naked torsos of a human male. Hair-covered lower body of a mountain goat.

There is nothing the least bit amusing or impish about them. These are hellish monsters, and they've come to slaughter and prepare their food - the Cyclops.

Kratos starts to back away, when the sharp clatter of hooves from the stairway diverts him back to the shadows.

MORE SATYRS enter through the door from which Kratos just came.

The Satyrs don't see Kratos, but they're not moving on either. Kratos takes in the room once again:

The honeycombed far wall beyond the bonfire...

That stone ball, resting on Atlas' shoulders...

Kratos glances down at the Satyrs coming for the Cyclops. They're prodding it now with the skewers and

-- KRATOS springs to the rail, leaps off

-- onto the Cyclops' shoulders! With a fast CLANG - CLANG, he cuts the chains holding it, and then drives his Blade into the monster's back!

It LUNGES forward, knocking down Satyrs, impaling itself, but not mortally, and begins to THRASH ACROSS THE HALL.

The ROOM GOES WILD as Kratos rides the Cyclops, twisting his Blade to goad it toward the statue of Atlas.

Satyrs spring after it, easily leaping ten to fifteen feet in the air to take shots at Kratos.

The howling Cyclops careens into the walls as it tries to pull Kratos off its back.

Afraid of the Satyrs, though, the Cyclops is going in the wrong direction. So Kratos STABS OUT ITS EYE.

The monster stumbles into the wall; Kratos redirects it with another twist of his blade in its shoulder, and then --

-- the Cyclops trips on the dais, and Kratos vaults off its back, rolls to his feet under the statue.

KRATOS

Looking for me?

The Satyrs are on the Cyclops fast, spearing it dead, but not before its last desperate act: it lashes out at Kratos with its fist, CRACKING Atlas' shin.

At first nothing happens. Then the crack spiderwebs.

Kratos is directly under the GIANT BALL. The Satyrs race up to Kratos, SPEARS POISED --

-- and then the statue's shin shatters. The statue topples forward, and Kratos, about to be speared --

-- steps into the breach. Takes the place of the statue's shin. Shouldering Atlas and the world on his back.

The Satyrs surround him, spears levelled, rattling THREATS in their scary tongue.

But seeing that Kratos is all that's keeping them from being crushed... threaten is all that they do.

 KRATOS (CONT'D)

This...

 (beat)

 ...is heavy.

The Satyrs BOUND AWAY FAST as --

-- KRATOS strains and with an infernal YELL, turns the statue the merest degree...

... and dives out of the way.

Gravity does the rest, and the statue falls directly into the hall. The giant BALL comes down hard on the floor, splitting it, and the forward momentum starts it --

-- ROLLING toward the opposite end by the bonfire.

Kratos jumps up, races behind the ball as it crushes the stonework, a dozen Satyrs, then over the bonfire and --

-- impacts the far wall, BLASTING THROUGH the cave-honeycombed masonry into --

EXT. FLYING BRIDGE - DAY

-- the open air of the deep natural chasm at the heart of the temple. Kratos, plunging after the ball, lands on a BRIDGE across the chasm at about the same instant as the giant stone ball does.

CRASH! The ball takes out the center of the bridge, then falls into the abyss.

Satyrs escape from the collapsing Hall of Atlas the same way Kratos did. Kratos sprints across the bridge, LEAPS the gap to the far side. He takes in the situation on the fly:

The many structures of Pandora's Temple rise into the sky on either side of the chasm. Its most extreme heights are hidden by a spectacular thunderhead far above. If that's where the Box is, it's still a long LONG way up.

But by smashing his way out of the Architect's maze, Kratos has essentially broken into the Temple's backstage area, and now has a clear, if daunting shortcut to take.

A DOZEN SATYRS leap the gap easily after Kratos who in turn leaps to a ledge --

EXT. CLIFFS OF MADNESS - DAY

-- and begins climbing diagonally up the chasm. The Satyrs spring after him. One misses the jump, looks like it fell, but its hooves catch in the tiniest crevices, and Kratos quickly discovers that Satyrs, like their mountain goat ancestors, are expert cliff climbers.

They're on Kratos fast, springing and bounding up the cliff. He grabs them, tries to kick them off, and though he beats the hell out of them, they're almost impossible to dislodge.

He finally manages to seize a Satyr in a scissor-hold, and with a powerful twist of his legs, flings it out into open air. It plunges screeching to its death.

Kratos moves around a cutting corner --

-- discovering a previously-concealed stretch of the chasm. It is an ancient quarry. A relic of the pre-divine history of the Temple.

The ruins of CRANES litter its length - ropes and tackle, dilapidated ROPE BRIDGES.

And visible at the end of the canyon, is the half-finished stone skeleton of an enormous domed structure: THE PANTHEON.

But a Satyr, unseen by Kratos, has gotten ahead and above him, and now drops and --

-- knocks Kratos off the cliff. They grapple in mid-air, fall, but Kratos grabs A CRANE ARM.

It jerks Kratos short, and the Satyr falls away.

Kratos looks up, sees the crane arm is old and will only hold him for a few seconds. The remaining Satyrs are descending after him too, one even leaping to the crane, hastening its --

-- COLLAPSE! But Kratos has used his momentum to swing out into space --

-- to grab the tackle of another crane!

-- Kratos swings out in a wide arc, KICKING a Satyr off the cliff before letting go and grabbing yet another line.

The Satyrs are game for the chase and leap after him.

But Kratos moves like Tarzan from crane tackle to stray line, to broken rope bridge. Gaining speed and momentum with every swing.

A Satyr crosses a rope bridge in front of Kratos -- trying to lance him with his spear. Kratos dodges and twists his swinging-rope around the Satyr's neck. The rope reaches its apex, snapping the monster's spine.

Kratos falls through the air to another rope bridge which he cuts --

-- in order to keep swinging! But the Satyrs who have jumped to it FALL.

The last pair of Satyrs watch for their moment as Kratos swings up the canyon to the next crane line. They spring fast through --

INT. CAVE, CLIFFS OF MADNESS - DAY

-- a cave. Duck through it in 2 seconds --

EXT. CLIFFS OF MADNESS - DAY

-- and back out on a ledge from which they should be able to spear Kratos as he goes by --

-- but only the rope end swings into view because --

-- Kratos, with a dark grin, is riding atop the arm of the crane itself, and the Satyrs don't see him in time as --

-- Kratos swings around BEHIND THEM. With a double-scissor of his Blades at full chain length, he cuts the two Satyrs in half.

Kratos leaps from this last crane to the GROUND. A triumphant beat...

... then he turns to the Pantheon, now looming above him.

EXT. PANTHEON - DAY

THUNDER RUMBLES ominously and constantly from the thunderhead which caps Pandora's Temple.

Here, scraping the lowest trains of cloud, the Pantheon's half-completed dome rises above Kratos. He enters.

INT./EXT. PANTHEON - DAY

Kratos strides out into the Pantheon. It is a vast circular space, its floor laid out in an intricate mosaic; massive statues in various states of completion of all of the Olympian gods and goddesses line the walls.

Among them - eerily half-faced - is a towering god with an enormous sword... Ares.

Suddenly a gust of wind stirs the cloud, and now among the upper reaches of the dome, Kratos sees --

-- THE ARCHITECT. A curling flight of steps leads to his work space well over Kratos' head. He sits at an immense DRAFTING TABLE.

AT THE DRAFTING TABLE

With a GOLDEN QUILL the Architect begins drawing; as he does:

KRATOS

Hears a rumbling sound from the chasm behind him. He glances back. Sees the ruins of the Hall of Atlas. Dust and distance obscure what is happening, but it seems as if the flying bridge is REPAIRING ITSELF.

AT THE DRAFTING TABLE

We see what the Architect is drawing: a new flying bridge, a new Hall of Atlas. And as he draws it, it becomes REAL.

ARCHITECT

(to himself, absorbed)

The span was overly ambitious...
But supporting the celestial sphere
on the statue's knee was pure
folly.

KRATOS

Shouts up to him.

KRATOS

Old Man! I am here!

THE ARCHITECT

continues working for a beat; and then glances down on Kratos at the center of the floor. Testy.

KRATOS (CONT'D)

Where is the Box?

ARCHITECT

The Hall of Atlas was a blind end.
You have shortcut my maze.

KRATOS

Like I said. I don't do tests.

ARCHITECT

I have corrected the weakness in
the design already.

And then THE ARCHITECT begins drawing something new. It is a figure of KRATOS, reaching in futility for the sky.

ARCHITECT (CONT'D)

But inspiration can come from the
most unexpected of places. Even
from a brute such as yourself. You
have come far, but you will not
reach the Aerie of Zeus.

Kratos looks up at the clouds... the way they circulate... a glimpse of something solid... and realizes the thunderhead is concealing some kind of structure.

ARCHITECT (CONT'D)

No. You will remain here under the
eyes of the gods. The centerpiece
of this Pantheon. A symbol of
mankind's strength -- and limits --
for eternity.

And now we see what he is beginning to draw: it is a massive and impossibly complex series of gears and turntables.

KRATOS

Can't see what the Architect is drawing, but the ground beneath him SHUDDERS, seems to lift an inch or two, then the bricks of the mosaic RIP AWAY in a series of concentric RINGS around him.

Kratos looks down into a vast GEARWORKS which assembles out of nothing before his eyes. They then MESH and begin to TURN.

The bricks of the mosaic fly back into place. Now the floor of the Pantheon BEGINS TO TURN - a series of concentric turntables moving in opposite directions.

THE ARCHITECT DRAWS FASTER

And now WALLS BEGIN TO APPEAR along the edges of the nested turntables.

KRATOS

Realizes he'd better start moving if he wants to escape. Because:

THE ARCHITECT

what the Architect is drawing is becoming clear: it is a vast, rotating, CIRCULAR MAZE... WITH NO EXIT.

And trapped at the center, the inspiration from which it has all spiraled out, that little figure of --

KRATOS

Who isn't taking this lying down. He dodges the flying stonework as it APPEARS AROUND HIM out of thin air. Jumps a wall an instant before its layers of stone rattle into existence behind him.

WALLS FORM in front of him, blocking him at every turn, forcing him through archways he doesn't want to go through, the turntables moving in such a way that he can't escape.

THE ARCHITECT

Draws with supernatural speed now; his eyes light up with a new idea and --

KRATOS

-- hears it coming a second before he sees it: a GIANT STONE CYLINDER STUDDED WITH SPIKES which comes rolling around the bend, filling the corridor from wall to wall.

Kratos turns to outrun it. As he does --

THE ARCHITECT

Begins drawing other fine details, mechanisms which --

TO KRATOS

-- become traps and hazards of every conceivable design. Darts. Blades. Crushing stone blocks. A hail of deadly objects which Kratos somehow avoids all the while that --

-- THE GIANT STONE CYLINDER ROLLS AFTER HIM, gaining inevitably until --

-- Kratos finally sees an archway ahead to the outermost ring of the maze. He dodges through an instant before the stone cylinder crushes him --

-- AND RUNS RIGHT INTO ANOTHER IDENTICAL CYLINDER GOING THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION.

It rolls right over him.

THE ARCHITECT

Pauses. Glances up. Emotionless. A beat. And then --

KRATOS

Spread-eagled among the spikes, rides up into view, alive! Survived in the foot or so of clearance created by the spikes.

Now atop the roller, he jumps up, begins jogging backward with it like a lumberjack in a log-rolling contest. He's approaching the Architect's perch fast.

And up this high on the roller, he can jump over the outermost ring wall and escape from the maze.

THE ARCHITECT

Sees this and tries to draw higher walls but --

KRATOS

-- reaches the edge first and leaps to the Architect's platform.

A dreadful beat as Kratos looms over the old man. Then Kratos grabs him by the neck.

KRATOS

Been working for eternity, eh?
Take a break.

And he FLINGS the Architect into the maze. A beat, and the roller impales and crushes him.

Kratos eyes the Architect's mutilated body carried away by the roller. Then his circumstances. The thunderhead rumbles above.

There's definitely a structure up there, but there is no way to get to it.

Kratos thinks. This is strange for him. Goes to the drafting table. Picks up the Architect's GOLDEN QUILL.

EXT. STAIRWAY TO THE AERIE - DAY

A TOWERING STRUCTURE now rises from the center of the Pantheon: it is Kratos' crooked and personal stairway to heaven.

It's hundreds of feet high, and Kratos has reached the cloud deck. Now he sees thin arches of stone through the mist supporting the ultimate level of the Temple. He enters --

EXT. AERIE OF ZEUS - DAY

-- the Aerie of Zeus. Gusts and lightning blast the atmosphere around him. The Aerie's architecture is light, spindly, like the air and clouds in which it resides.

The Architect is suddenly there behind Kratos. No sign of his mortal injuries.

ARCHITECT

The Box is there, beyond the mist.
Take it.

(beat)

if you are man enough.

Kratos crosses the marble floor. The mist thins, but the heart of the thunderstorm boils dark above him.

The sky itself seems to rest atop a lane of towering pillars at the end of which sits a gigantic, 75-foot long BRONZE BULL. The statue's head and horns lowered as if in warning. It is the sacred animal of --

-- ZEUS. A STATUE of whom stands behind the bull. In the marble Zeus' one hand is a SPEAR held high. It is the FOCAL POINT OF THE THUNDERSTORM.

And in Zeus' other hand at the end of a gold chain is PANDORA'S BOX.

It is a massive square chest. The lid is heavily ornamented, its sides made of some kind of translucent stone. Its interior seems to churn with light.

Kratos moves toward it. Thunder reverberates at every pace. Kratos rightly and warily eyes the Bronze Bull.

Instinct warns him to favor the cover of the pillars on one side, but he has already taken one step too far, awakening --

-- THE BRONZE BULL. With a groan of metal, its head turns slowly toward him, and it rises from its massive haunches.

KRATOS

Of course.

And Kratos sprints. It breaths instant life into the Bull. As Kratos races for the pillars the Bull snorts steam, and its eyes shutter open.

The Bull BOUNDS at Kratos with a BELLOW which resonates like some trapped animal soul in a giant brass instrument.

And it's fast. Kratos isn't halfway to the pillars when it --

-- BASHES HIM INTO THE AIR maybe fifty feet. But Kratos has rolled with it -- isn't dead -- and glances off its flank before he hits the floor. A long beat of PAIN as the bull stomps around, trying to smash him.

And then Kratos erupts in RAGE. He leaps onto the Bull's neck, Blades driving --

-- picador-like into the metal where its spine should be. But with bone-splitting recoil, even the mighty Blades of Chaos can't puncture the beast's bronze hide.

The Bull bucks violently, hurling Kratos into a pillar, then rams it, just missing crushing him against it.

Kratos jumps up, clangs his Blades across its face over and over, but as his fury mounts, so does the Bull's, and it drives him --

-- slaloming backward among the pillars which Kratos uses to evade the Bull's repeated counter-thrusts.

The Bull drives Kratos from his cover at last, and Kratos hurls himself at it full-force --

-- and gets knocked back to the floor at the center of the Aerie. The Bull comes at him to gore him again --

-- and Kratos slings one of his chains out to full length, lashing a Blade around one of the Bull's legs.

With a mighty roar, Kratos braces himself against a pillar to try to trip the monster but --

-- only GETS JERKED incredibly hard into the pillar. Then whipped out from behind it and slammed up and down across the floor.

The Bull can't figure out where Kratos is; small consolation for Kratos though as it flings him around from side to side.

Kratos finally frees himself and staggers to his feet. He runs, heading for the Box and the statue of Zeus.

The Bull sees him, charges, catches up, and again BUTTS him into the air. It's a brutal blow, but once again Kratos has somehow turned it into a vault --

-- which lands him on the dais next to the Box and Zeus.

The monster bellows, probes with its sharp horns, forced to restrain its full fury amid the precious treasure it has been designed to guard.

Kratos dodges. The Bull lunges nimbly around the dais. Kratos smites it with his Blade, LETTING OUT ALL HIS RAGE ON IT, but it's invincible.

The thunderhead swirls, its apex directly over them, lightning striking faster and faster as the fury of their fight feeds --

-- the Bull. It is all of Kratos' fury and physical strength magnified a hundredfold. And Kratos finally understands it.

KRATOS (CONT'D)
I can't beat you.

And he lowers his weapons. The Bull still jabs at him, tries to roar him out from behind his cover.

Kratos continues to dodge, but as he moves more slowly, the Bull seems to lose some of its own momentum.

KRATOS (CONT'D)
Because you take your rage from me.

Kratos sheathes his blades. The Bull straightens in response. But it still moves threateningly around Kratos.

Kratos steps out from behind the statue of Zeus. The Bull BELLOWS in his face, bathing him with steam. It stamps the stone right next to him.

It's all Kratos can do to stand his ground and not react.

KRATOS (CONT'D)

Not everyone who stands in your way
is your enemy.

The storm overhead brews, but has abated with the fight.

Kratos puts his hand on the Bull's bronze muzzle.

KRATOS (CONT'D)

You are not my foe. I have no hate
for any man or beast, nor any
god... save one.

Kratos turns his back on the Bull. Exposing himself to easy
destruction --

-- but the Bull does nothing, just watches Kratos move to
look upon Pandora's Box.

It sits there the size of a large desk, chained to Zeus'
hand. Interior light burning with mystery.

Kratos reaches up, grabs the chain... and BREAKS IT. Then
Kratos senses a presence behind him:

The Architect is now standing there by the Bull. The Bull
settles down, stiffens, and becomes a mere statue once again.

ARCHITECT

Thank you.

Kratos nods, and with that, the lightning ceases, the storm
blows away, and the Architect turns to ash. A last gust of
the thunderhead BLOWS THE ARCHITECT'S ASHES TO the winds
which strangely becomes a POV high over:

EXT. BATTLEFIELD OUTSIDE ATHENS - DAY (SAME TIME)

ATHENS. Ash and black fire storm of a different kind darken
this sky. In it is the cruel face of ARES. WHO REACTS,
sensing Kratos' victory.

ARES

Well done, Kratos.

And with that, he DESCENDS from his tornado, becoming a physical form 600 feet tall as we've seen him appear before.

He lands astride the battlefield. Smiles with cruel, omniscient satisfaction.

Then he kicks the roof off an outlying building, tears a PILLAR out of its foundation --

ARES (CONT'D)

And now for your reward.

-- and HURLS IT INTO THE SKY. It rockets into the stratosphere, crossing ocean and desert. Streaks half a world away --

EXT. AERIE OF ZEUS - DAY

-- to its target: Kratos. Who, straining to pull Pandora's Box from its resting place, glances up just in time to see the razor edge of the splintered pillar before it --

-- IMPALES HIM THROUGH THE CHEST!

ON KRATOS

Dead where he stands in a haze of vaporized blood, transfixed to the wall of the Aerie by the pillar. He's almost been severed in two.

Brain still functioning. Hands somehow.

A shocking, shocking long BEAT.

Dying consciousness registers Harpies and Vultures descending on the Aerie.

Watching now the Box lifted into the sky, its chain in the grip of a Giant Vulture.

AND THEN FADING TO BLACK.

Is the movie over?

Then the FADE becomes A BLACK-RED HAZE.

Which begins to grow in intensity, becoming --

EXT. HADES - NIGHT

-- intense speed. Boundless space. Shaking and unclear as if viewed through watering newborn eyes...

Slowly transforming into a plunging shot of the depths of Hades.

Towering plumes of volcanic black smoke. Strange, hellish spires of stone suspended in mid air. A vast molten sea many, many miles down casts its ruddy light like an inverse sun.

And then there's the SCREAMING.

ON KRATOS

His soul falling into the depths of hell, one of thousands falling like rain. He is screaming; his scream is not one of despair like the other souls, but of FURY.

Flashes of light - incinerated souls - patter on the molten surface below.

Kratos veers as best he can toward one of the strangely suspended spires. It rushes up fast, and --

-- he slashes into it, snagging on with his bare hands.

EXT. SPIRE, HADES - NIGHT

Kratos clammers up the side of the spire. We now see that his body - at least in this ethereal state - is whole; no sign of the trauma which killed him.

He reaches the top of the spire, a tiny lifeboat in the void, and finds it crowded with LOST SOULS.

As Kratos forces his way on, others fall off. The remainder WAIL in his face, clutch each other in abject FEAR.

KRATOS

Where am I!?

There are strange, silver flickers of light around their heads and shoulders - auras - visible for just a fleeting instant like an invisible laser revealed by smoke.

The Lost Souls seem to see something in Kratos, something they want for themselves, and they claw at him like a life preserver.

Then we see it: Kratos' own silver aura. But his isn't just an aura: from him stretches a single SILVER THREAD into the infinite blackness above.

KRATOS (CONT'D)

Where am I!?

Then Kratos starts to recognize the FACES, ghosts of people he has slain. Barbarians, the Merchant Captain, et al. Kratos backs from them in horror to the edge.

Where he now sees an archipelago of spires spreading out across the void to a vast black island.

Kratos, on the verge of being overwhelmed, LEAPS for the nearest spire, half-flying, half-falling across the gap.

He lands hard. And Kratos, still roaring out at the infernal landscape, finally runs out of breath.

Wild-eyed, he begins to understand where he is. This is far beyond his worst nightmares. He peers up into the black sky where he fell from.

KRATOS (CONT'D)

ARES!

Helpless, he watches the rain of souls.

IT MOVES HIM. To the nearest expression of compassion we've ever seen him show.

But before he can do anything else, he hears a faint cry, piercing through the din to his ear.

It is his DAUGHTER'S VOICE.

Kratos whirls. It's coming from that far-off black island, looming mirage-like in the searing air. His face HARDENS.

EXT. HADES, FLAMING TEMPLE - NIGHT

Kratos leaps to the blackened stone ground. The terrible sight before him gives him pause.

It is the burning Temple of Athena where he killed Leia and Ione. Only now it stands on a long prominence which juts out over the flaming rifts of the underworld.

His wife CRIES OUT from within.

Kratos races to the temple.

INT. HADES, FLAMING TEMPLE - NIGHT

Moving as if in a dream, Kratos enters. And there, at the center, Leia shields Ione from a HULKING FIGURE approaching through the flames from the opposite side of the temple --

-- HIMSELF. It is the old EVIL KRATOS, dripping with blood and madness. Stalking his own wife and child.

FATE (V.O.)

And in the depths of Hades, Kratos beheld the souls of his beloved wife and daughter, living the endless echo of his crime.

LEIA

(to Doppelganger)

Kratos!? What's wrong with you!?
Kratos!

They back away from the Evil Kratos as our Kratos, distinguished by his pale, post-curse appearance, is forced to relive his crime, a moment which we get the feeling exists in some terminal, hellish loop...

IONE

Daddy, no!

... except this time, our Kratos won't allow it.

KRATOS

Get away from them.

Kratos, Blades drawn, interposes himself.

Leia and Ione stare, not knowing what to make of the real Kratos' ghostly appearance as he --

-- squares off with his Doppelganger, who draws his own Blades of Chaos. And then --

-- from the recesses of the temple appear TWO MORE DOPPELGANGERS OF KRATOS.

Each possessing all the bestial strength and bloodthirstiness Kratos once boasted.

Note: the three doppelgangers - Kratos' inner demons - are also known as AGONY, REMORSE, AND REGRET and visibly wear their namesake emotions throughout the fight. But for scripting purposes we will call them EVIL KRATOS #1, 2, and 3.

As his wife tries to shield their daughter, Kratos circles to protect them. But it's him versus three of himself.

KRATOS (CONT'D)

(to Leia)

Forgive me.

A beat, and then Evil Kratos #1 lunges. Kratos meets his blades with his own -- SPARKS FLY, and the fight begins.

The three Doppelgangers are fast and incredibly strong - but our Kratos is hardened by his ordeal, more cunning and has far more to fight for.

As Evil Kratos #1 and Kratos parry each other's blows, Evil Kratos #2 leaps over the duelists to attack Kratos from behind.

Evil Kratos #3 circles, trying to get at Leia and Ione, but Kratos keeps maneuvering himself between Evil Kratos #3 and his family.

Evil Kratos #1 knocks Kratos down; Kratos foot-sweeps Evil Kratos #1, and spins to meet #2 for a moment. They fight ferociously, Evil Kratos #2 snarling in Kratos' face as they cross weapons, but our Kratos is relentless and steady, and he kicks Kratos #2 into #3.

But Evil Kratos #1 is back up. Kratos once again fights him as the other two Doppelgangers struggle to recover.

Evil Kratos #1 and Kratos stab at each other; the Doppelganger delivers a grazing cut to Kratos' shoulder. Kratos fakes being seriously injured, which whips up Evil Kratos #1's bloodlust.

The Evil Kratos comes on hard and fast... too hard and fast.

Such that he's not protecting himself when our Kratos 'recovers' and deftly CUTS OFF EVIL KRATOS #1'S ARM.

Kratos sees Evil Kratos #2 and #3 back on their feet, and lets out the chains of his weapons. His Doppelgangers respond in kind.

With all these Blades flying on the ends of their chains, it's a lethal space.

Evil Kratos #2 and #3 come for Kratos simultaneously. Which is exactly what Kratos wanted. He slashes his own weapons across theirs, and all three combatants' chains become tangled.

Kratos, ready for this, yanks them both off their feet, and springs on Evil Kratos #2. As Kratos chokes #2 with his own chains, #3 untangles himself and #1 slowly picks himself off the floor.

Ignoring Kratos, the now one-armed Evil Kratos #1 stalks Leia and Ione.

Kratos sees him, and with a vicious twist of chain, hefts Evil Kratos #2 on his back, still choking him.

#1, covered in blood, leaps at Leia --

-- whom KRATOS grasps in his embrace at the last second, shielding her.

Evil Kratos #1's Blade goes through both Evil Kratos #2 and Kratos, its tip showing through Kratos' shoulder.

Kratos cries out in pain.

But Leia is saved.

For a moment. Then EVIL KRATOS #3 rises into frame, holding Ione high by the hair, ready to cleave her --

-- but our Kratos, in a final spasm of violence, shoves Leia down and SPINS with both Blades --

-- trepan's Evil Kratos #1's skull --

-- slices through Ione's hair so that she falls from her assailant's grip --

-- and cuts Evil Kratos #3's throat half way through.

Evil Kratos #1 and #2 lie dead; #3 staggers back for a beat, clutching at the gushing blood from his throat. Stares at Kratos.

Is he going to rally and keep coming at Kratos?

No. He topples over, dead.

A long BEAT.

Kratos looks down at his wife and daughter. Filled with pain and pity and joy.

LEIA

Kratos...

He puts out his hand to touch her face, and now sees its wan, shade-like quality.

KRATOS

Oh gods.

LEIA

Why do you look like that? Who were they?

Kratos can't answer. He's so overcome.

IONE

Daddy, I'm scared. Say something.

KRATOS

(she is killing him)
I love you.

LEIA

This temple... this place. Where are we? Why are we here?

(beat)

We shouldn't be here, should we?

And Kratos' grief and awe gave way to his old determination.

KRATOS

No. You shouldn't.

He lifts Ione, takes Leia by the hand. She feels his sheltering arm once more. Heroic.

EXT. HADES, FLAMING TEMPLE - NIGHT

Kratos, Leia and Ione emerge from the temple and stand there in the heart of Hades. From the expressions on Leia and Ione's faces, it's clear they've never stepped outside the temple.

LEIA

(scared)

This place... this is...

And then she understands.

KRATOS

We will find a way out.

Kratos and his family reach the end of the prominence. Beyond is only void and the flaming river far below.

Kratos turns them around, moves resolutely toward the ominous black island to find another way but as he does, the smoke wafting across the scene reveals:

HIS SILVER THREAD which streaks into the black sky, Kratos' final connection to the living.

Leia sees it. Stops. Then sees that she and Ione have no such silver threads.

Kratos turns to look back. Why aren't they following him? Eyes meet.

KRATOS (CONT'D)

Come with me!

ON LEIA: Profound. Sad. And Kratos knows

LEIA

No, Kratos. It's you who doesn't belong here.

Kratos has no intention of abandoning her, but suddenly SOMETHING BLOWS THROUGH THE VOLCANIC SMOKE --

-- an invisible form, or mostly so, its titanic scale revealed only by the effects it has on the things around it --

-- grasping Kratos now in what we sense is a gigantic hand -- the hand of HADES, GOD OF THE DEAD, from whom this underworld takes its name.

Kratos rockets up into the air, hangs there a beat, arms pinned against his sides like a doll.

Turned over as if he's being examined. The halo-like Silver Thread plainly visible.

For a moment the black smoke flows around what appears to be the eye slot of HADES' GREEK HELM.

KRATOS

Hades! Take me! Let them go!

A long beat. Then a CHILLING VOICE CRACKLES OUT:

HADES

They are MINE...

And Hades turns, hurling Kratos at the black sky. He streaks out of the abyss, body tumbling, accelerated at crushing speed and --

SMASH CUT:

INT. SACRED CAVE UNDER THE PARTHENON - DAY

-- into the arms of THE ORACLE, severe, strong, holding us down UNDER WATER. Then dragging us out. Like a nightmare. MOUTH moving with some kind of incantation as we THRASH in agony, loss and --

-- then realize we're in Kratos' POV. As he's dunked in the Sacred Water of the grotto.

The Oracle drags him up, thrashing. Kratos clutches his eviscerated abdomen... to find his wound healing. Visibly. And fast. Kratos flails on the ground, groping his gut... and passes out. Cut to black.

FADE IN ON:

EXT. PARTHENON - DAY

Kratos, looking more like hell than he ever has, peers down at a GIANT VULTURE fiddled with arrows.

The Oracle stands nearby in her armor. Athenian soldiers, grim faces all around, are looking out into the distance.

ORACLE
(Re: the vulture)
It was carrying your body.

Kratos touches his gut.

KRATOS
How...

ORACLE
The Sacred Spring heals whom the goddess favors. I guess you're favored.

Kratos follows her gaze to the city walls. In places they have collapsed, and ferocious battles are being waged in the gaps.

KRATOS

Ares. He has the Box. He'll use it to destroy Athena and take over Olympus.

The Oracle just turns and looks at him. He stands there, helpless, haunted, broken by the realization:

KRATOS (CONT'D)

He used me to get it.

(beat)

He said whether I was at his side or not, I would serve him. And I have.

Is he beaten? The Oracle turns her face away.

ORACLE

So even the mighty Kratos is a puppet of the gods?

He reacts to the taunt. As the Oracle intended.

KRATOS

I am a puppet! You stole me from my wife and daughter. You pulled me out of the grave. Out of Hades. Where I belong!

The Oracle wheels on him.

ORACLE

There'll be time enough for Hades. But now - right now - take this gift of Athena. This second chance. And use it.

KRATOS

I don't want her second chance. I should let Ares kill the rest of the gods.

Kratos stares at her. Sees the setting sun. Then turns back to her, and with a look from his old self --

KRATOS (CONT'D)

But patience isn't my virtue.

-- grabs a horse from a nearby soldier and springs up.

EXT. BATTLEMENTS, ATHENS - DAY

Fighting rages in the city. Kratos moves fast along one of the sections of city wall which have not yet fallen to Ares' minions. And then he stops.

For out of the clouds above descends the flaming tornado which is ARES.

He rapidly forms, giant and god-like, striding toward the wall. Dangling in his hand like a fine amulet on a chain is Pandora's Box.

His appearance draws his avian carrion eaters to him.

ON KRATOS

Old and deep wells of rage returning. Filling his black eyes. But there's something else there now too, tempering it. And instead of calling Ares out as he did in this same exact spot once before, he TAKES OFF RUNNING --

ARES

Athena! Sister! I know you hear me. Show yourself!

-- not away from Ares, but sprinting parallel to him along the wall, trying to keep pace with Ares' giant stride.

The BOX, swinging in Ares' hand, is just there, a few dozen yards out of reach.

ARES (CONT'D)

Come out of your refuge. Face me, one warrior to another!

Fleeing Athenian SOLDIERS, spooked by Ares' close approach, invite attack from Ares' aerial minions.

One of them, a GIANT VULTURE, doesn't see --

-- Kratos leap to the battlement, and then ONTO ITS BACK.

Kratos goads it into the air. The huge bird steers crazily amongst its companions after Ares.

ARES (CONT'D)

Athena! What are you afraid of?
This trinket? This little curio?

Ares raises Pandora's Box high. Closer and closer. Veering one way, then another, Kratos homes in on the moving target swinging in Ares' fist.

ON ARES

Obsessed with his divine rival, doesn't sense the presence of a mere mortal til the last second when --

ARES (CONT'D)

Kratos...

-- SLASHES through the chain holding Pandora's Box and grabs it as it falls.

Ares spins and SMITES the Giant Vulture, knocking Kratos and the Box --

EXT. BATTLEFIELD, BEFORE THE WALLS OF ATHENS - DAY

-- to the ground. Kratos hits hard. Pandora's Box impacts hard too, bounces, and lands some distance away.

Kratos drags himself up. Above him loom the city walls, the giant statue of Athena, the SWORD BRIDGE --

And Ares.

ARES

... Back from Hades. You refused your reward? Didn't you find what you were looking for there?

Kratos scrambles to the Box. For some reason, Ares lets him. Kratos looks for a way to open it.

ARES (CONT'D)

Thank you for bringing me Pandora's Box. Open it Kratos. Inside lies the power to slay a god.

But there is no latch. No hinges. What appeared to be a lid, is now, on closer inspection, simply an ornamented top.

ARES (CONT'D)

What's the matter?

(mocking)

It doesn't open?

Kratos, furiously trying to open it, feels the heat from Ares as he is now only a giant's stride away.

ARES (CONT'D)

When I discovered what you now have, I was angry as well. Could you believe Zeus capable of such a cruel joke?

He bursts out laughing. Kratos strains with all his might on the 'lid', and realizes Ares is right. The Box doesn't open.

ARES (CONT'D)

I can. After all, he is a god himself. I would have used the Box to take his throne, as he took his father's before him. But my only recourse now is to destroy the other gods in their entirety by destroying the humanity which believes in them. Zeus and my siblings will oppose me. It will be a war to last for ages to come. More complicated. But in the end no less certain because I am stronger than all the gods of Olympus together.

(beat)

For what they don't understand is that war is in the heart of all men.

Kratos gives up trying to force a nonexistent lid. Stares at the Box. His foe Ares before him. His vengeance at hand, but inaccessible.

ARES (CONT'D)

You will not have your revenge. I am called an Immortal for a reason. And you are - and always have been - merely my servant.

But it doesn't sting Kratos the way Ares intends or we expect it should.

Because Kratos is still staring at the Box, feeling something... Seeing its Zen-puzzle nature.

KRATOS

It isn't supposed to open. And that is only right.

He puts his hand on it; its internal light forever just beyond reach. Feeling its true power.

KRATOS (CONT'D)

For it is the nature of what lies
inside. Always just out of reach.
But keeps us reaching.

Kratos turns his dark gaze on Ares.

KRATOS (CONT'D)

Inside this Box is Hope.

Ares LAUGHS.

ARES

Hope!? What is hope to a god?

KRATOS

Nothing. Nor to a beast. But it
makes a man capable of everything.

(beat)

Yes, I have served you. But I am
not your servant. What I am is
your death.

Ares has had enough, and raises his foot to crush Kratos into
flaming oblivion -

-- and Kratos, knowing the Blades of Chaos can do Ares no
harm, reaches for the only thing which seems like it could:
THE SWORD BRIDGE HUNDREDS OF FEET ABOVE HIS HEAD.

It is an act of pure instinct, fueled not by rage or fear or
desperation -- but something new to Kratos: hope.

And something amazing happens.

The CHAINS around Kratos' forearm suddenly CONSTRICT. Like
they're going to crush him... but they're also SHRINKING, and
instead of crushing him, they EXPLODE, setting Kratos free.

Kratos reaches for the bridge over his head - the gigantic
blade in the sky - and in a wizardly use of forced
perspective SEEMS TO GRASP ITS HILT.

Which to Ares' and our amazement he actually has done...

... because Kratos is now 600 feet tall, just like Ares.

The ground cracks under his instantaneous mass; dust and
debris from the rapid displacement of air swirls around him.

If Kratos is surprised by this, he doesn't show it. He has
one thing in mind. He stares into Ares' eyes -- on the same
level. And with his free hand THROWS A PUNCH.

It would knock a hole through a mountain, and with Ares's foot still raised to crush Kratos, it catches the war god off balance and sends him reeling through the siege works. Wooden assault towers and scads of his own minions are crushed beneath him.

With a powerful jerk, Kratos breaks the sword-bridge free of the enormous Athena statue's stone grasp.

Ares, stunned more by Kratos' transformation than the blow, flips up to his feet.

Kratos tests the weapon in his hands, bangs it against the city walls, sloughing off its outer skin of marble, revealing its core of shining metal and its true nature as --

-- THE BLADE OF THE GODS.

ARES

Athena! What have you done!?

KRATOS

She has nothing to do with this.
But I think she's going to enjoy
it.

Regaining his presence, Ares laughs and over his shoulder draws an immense, flaming OBSIDIAN TWO-HANDED SWORD.

ARES

Superb

A LONG BEAT. Kratos circles, closing the range, scattering the legions of Ares underfoot. Arrows, javelins, and stones from siege engines fly around him like thistle dust.

Flames lick out from the joints of Ares' black armor, his elemental nature bleeding into his battlefield presence.

Kratos tenses and --

-- SPRINGS for Ares. The Blade of the Gods rips through the sound barrier, and they CLASH.

Ares HOWLS in delight as his sword intercepts Kratos', lighting up the sky.

These aren't lumbering giants. Instead everything at this scale happens with incredible speed and force, and the physical properties of the materials, the atmosphere, etc. alter in mind-bending ways.

They strike at each other; each swing punctuated by a sonic boom. Each connection of blades releases heat and static electricity visible as lightning and distorted air.

They lock weapons; Ares shoves Kratos around, crushing his own hordes, until Kratos trips over some kind of massive siege works.

Kratos lands with an Earth-shattering concussion.

Kratos evades a blow aimed at his head, then leaps up, springing one foot off the city wall to take an overhead shot at Ares --

-- which glances off Ares' armor. Kratos lands, following through with an enraged series of cuts which Ares parries, giving ground until Kratos has driven him off the battlefield into --

EXT. PLUNDERED WASTELAND - DAY

-- the wasteland which Ares' army has plundered around Athens. Burned houses, fields, abandoned shrines.

Kratos shoulder-slams Ares, blowing him through a farm pond which is splashed away with one heavy step, through a beautiful, deserted barn which splinters into a thousand pieces.

Ares uses Kratos' momentum, spinning him past and THROWING him forward across a field of crops.

Kratos skids through the soil, leaving an enormous tear through the ruined field.

Ares cleaves at his head, missing, sending a rain of soil hundreds of feet into the air.

Kratos gets up, throwing a huge fistful of dirt and ash - in fact, an entire ruined homestead - in Ares' face. Ares blocks the CHEAP SHOT Kratos takes with the Blade in his other hand.

ARES

You are still mortal, and I am
still the God of WAR!

And he avoids a lethal stab from Kratos by GOING TORNADIC. He swirls in half physical/half flaming whirlwind form, grabbing Kratos and wrestling him into the air.

Kratos twists his blade in the semi-material shoulder of Ares
- to no serious effect.

Ares sprouts a second set of arms and pummels Kratos as they
whirl a couple of hundred feet off the ground wrestling in
the tornado --

EXT. SHORE - DAY

-- which finally spins into the ruins of a seaside temple.
Their impact raises a cloud of marble splinters which, due to
the scale, seems to settle in slow motion like snow.

Ares grabs Kratos' chin, tries to cut his throat but --

-- Kratos ROLLS through the temple into the SURF.

Sand FUSES TO GLASS and a huge FLASH OF STEAM goes up as the
water forces Ares back into his material giant-god form.

But he still has the upper hand and jumps on Kratos' back,
ramming his face into the wet muck. Kratos kicks and pounds,
a beached leviathan.

Ares raises his sword to skewer Kratos, but Kratos has
slipped his own blade back under his armpit and THRUSTS it
blindly and deeply into ARES' GROIN.

Ares SCREAMS and topples back into the water. His blood
flows black and flaming like oil.

Kratos gets to his hands and knees. Ares, doubled over,
backs through the waves, only knee-deep to a giant.

EXT. AEGEAN SEA DAY

Kratos rises and stalks him. Ares staggers away through the
waves toward MOUNTAINS RISING FROM A DISTANT SHORE.

Kratos wades after him, the water rapidly rising to his
chest.

KRATOS

You run from me, God of War? A
mortal?

Kratos catches up with him near the far shore. It is wild,
mythic coastline. Towering sea cliffs loom ahead.

Ares rounds one of these cliffs, into the cove beyond it and -

-- KRATOS, judging his motion, KICKS THROUGH THE CLIFF --

-- and slams into Ares, leaving a magnificent NATURAL ARCH where the cliff was.

Ares rolls with Kratos, FLIPPING HIM HIGH into the sky. Kratos lands in a titanic geyser of water.

The resulting TSUNAMI knocks Ares back, takes out the coastline, then propagates out to sea to wreak havoc god-knows-where.

Kratos gets up, sees Ares climbing the cliffs, ascending into the mountains.

EXT. MOUNTAINS - DAY

As Ares strides higher and higher into the mountains he garners speed, seeming to grow EVEN LARGER than he was.

Kratos, following, DOES THE SAME. He crashes through forests, brings down landslides as he scrambles over the broken and forbidding landscape after Ares --

-- who has reached a saddle in the mountain range and turned to face Kratos.

When he speaks, his voice is even deeper, more distorted with his increased size.

ARES

See the cunning strategem my sister has spun? I her mortal enemy, and you the murderer of her believers, destroying each other.

(beat)

What has she promised you? Forgiveness? Your wife and child back? Do you really think she has the power to grant such things?

But Kratos won't be drawn into talk and throws himself at Ares.

Swords fly. Severing tops of mountains. Igniting forests with their heat.

Their fight is epic. Changing the face of the landscape around them, a titanic struggle, their fight a creation myth in its own right.

Wind blasts the sky, driving clouds before it. Ares, backed to a snow-capped peak, fends Kratos off, and just as Kratos' assault reaches its climax Ares leaps from the mountain top, escaping --

EXT. PLAIN - DAY

-- to a broad plain below. Grasslands and acacias stretch to the horizon.

Kratos lands nearby on one knee. Ares' retreating footsteps set fire to the grass.

Reaching a low plateau, he turns and raises his arms high --

-- vaporizing the water in everything as far as the eye can see. Grass and trees crisp instantly, animals collapse, water boiling out of their lungs and pores.

Kratos' skin cracks and dries. The searing air takes the breath out of Kratos.

The water gathers in a thick haze above Ares as he turns the plain into desert.

Kratos presses on, but now every step in this desiccated wasteland is agony.

He's almost to Ares. Ares STRAINS, grasping the air as if to wring every drop of water out of it --

-- and then it's suddenly too much. The sky, holding all it can, EXPLODES in a downpour to rival the Flood's.

Kratos shades his eyes in the rain, but now has lost Ares.

He trudges forward, stepping over newly-born rivers, Blade of the Gods in hand. No sign of Ares.

EXT. LAND'S END - DAY

Kratos emerges from the rain, and there, cornered finally against the deep sea, stands his divine foe.

The ground quakes with Kratos' approach.

ARES

Look at you, Kratos, astride the world like one of us.

Ares STRIKES unexpectedly, and Kratos bobs back, earns a searing cut from his brow to his jaw.

But Kratos, in turn, has stabbed his own sword through Ares' elbow.

Ares' sword arm fails, and Kratos slams into him, knocking Ares to his knees.

Ares BREATHES FIRE in Kratos' face, but Kratos doesn't flinch. Instead he wrenches his sword free of Ares' mangled arm. Ares' fiery breath goes out, transformed into a roar of agony.

Kratos holds the Blade of the Gods poised over Ares' heart.

ARES (CONT'D)

All Olympus sees you and fears what man may become. Slay me, and what do you think the gods will do?

KRATOS

Flee. And leave this world to us.

Kratos DRIVES the Blade through Ares' chest and into the depths of the Earth beneath the god.

A fountain of LAVA explodes from the sundered rock, blasting through Ares' chest and into the sky.

Kratos stands back as he watches Ares' black, flaming blood pool out over the land, its smoke mixing with the pyroclastic EXPLOSION which then erupts from the shattered Earth.

As Kratos backs away, the VOLCANIC MOUNTAIN which is forming before his very eyes seems to grow immensely fast --

-- an effect amplified by the fact that Kratos is RETURNING TO THE SIZE OF A NORMAL MAN.

As Kratos watches, Ares' sprawled limbs are concealed in the smoke and molten stone, a knee becoming a ledge of mountain. An open hand, a spur of a hill.

The volcanic mountain is now MILES wide and miles high, its smoke reaching the stratosphere. It has consumed Ares.

Kratos takes in the awesome sight for a beat, then turns away.

EXT. WINDSWEPT SHORE - DAY

The Volcano now far behind him, Kratos, chain-less and blade-less reaches the ruins of the Temple of Athena.

Where he murdered his wife and daughter. He takes it in for a beat.

There is no sense of victory about him.

The Oracle is there waiting. In her most seductive attire.

ORACLE

Kratos.

KRATOS

You have what you want. Now tell your goddess to give me mine.

ORACLE

You have it. Forgiveness.

He looks at her, puzzled and hollow-feeling.

ORACLE (CONT'D)

You are forgiven by the gods, but they are not the judge whose mercy you seek.

(beat)

It is the price you must pay. The curse you must bear: to always hunger for what you cannot have.

THE WORDS SHOCK Kratos. They are the words of the Old Crone. And now Kratos sees in the Oracle's eyes --

-- the same shade of steel-gray --

-- which he saw in ATHENA'S.

KRATOS

Athena.

ORACLE

Yes.

(beat)

And I am greatly pleased with you.

So I let you see me in this pleasing form.

Kratos, wary, stares. She is not just an Oracle, but ATHENA HERSELF.

ATHENA

You will never forgive yourself for your crimes. And that is as it should be. But there is an empty throne on Olympus now. And with you at my side...

(beat)

...there will be order. Come with me. Take what is yours, rightfully won in battle. Take the godhood which awaits you. And take me.

Kratos is stunned. A long beat.

And then smoldering fury.

And he turns away.

ATHENA (CONT'D)

Kratos?

But Kratos doesn't answer her. He walks away.

FATE (V.O.)

I am Fate. I weave well. But once an eon, a thread escapes me. Ends badly. And so it did with Kratos.

EXT. CLIFF TOP - NIGHT

WE RETURN TO THAT GHOST, standing atop the cliff where we found him in the beginning.

FATE (V.O.)

Spurning Athena, Kratos embraced the madness to which the gods had driven him.

(beat)

The madness, not that of a beast... but of a man.

Kratos teeters on the edge, staring into the mists below. And then he throws himself off, HEAD FIRST.

Kratos falls, wind stinging his eyes as he plunges, cutting through the last layer of cloud, sea and JAGGED ROCKS rushing up at him now and we hear through his gritted teeth --

KRATOS

Your turn, Hades...

-- just before we SMASHCUT TO BLACK.